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A publication of the University of Illinois Springfield



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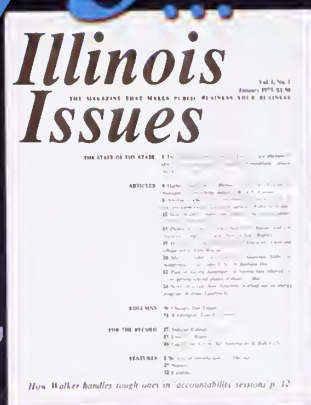
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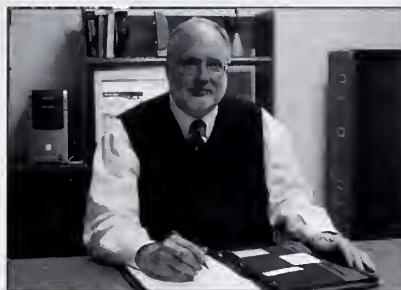


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*Dana Heupel*



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implementation Committee in 1971 and 1972, jokingly phrased his question to the 50 former delegates, staff and relatives of deceased delegates was: "Would any of you have suggestions for change of the document, or maybe since you enacted it, it is sacrosanct?"

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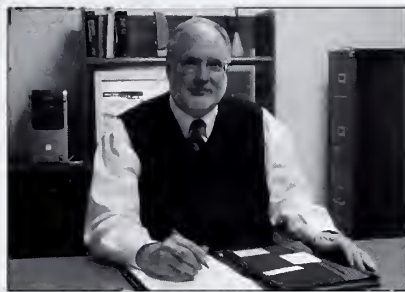
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Dana Heupel



## Forum allows Constitution framers to ponder what they might want to change

by Dana Heupel

If you could do it all over again, what would you do differently?

Most of us have imagined our answers to that question. But when it is posed to a collection of distinguished men and women who helped write the current Illinois Constitution 40 years ago, their responses become real possibilities for future public policy.

The question arose during a reunion of 1970 Con-Con delegates and staff November 7 in Chicago. It was proposed by Jim Nowlan, a senior fellow with the University of Illinois' Institute of Government and Public Affairs, during a panel discussion I had the pleasure and honor to moderate.

The exact way that Nowlan, a former state representative who served on the Illinois House Constitutional Implementation Committee in 1971 and 1972, jokingly phrased his question to the 50 former delegates, staff and relatives of deceased delegates was: "Would any of you have suggestions for change of the document, or maybe since you enacted it, it is sacrosanct?"

Former convention staffer Richard Lockhart quickly latched onto the bait: "I would like to see something done about the amendatory veto power of the governor. In my opinion, it is abused. I know the speaker is trying to mitigate that with House rules."

Indeed, that issue has long been a bristling point for Illinois House Speaker Michael Madigan, also a delegate to the Constitutional Convention and a reunion attendee. He believes that the amendatory veto power was drafted to allow a governor only to correct minor technical mistakes in legislation — not to rewrite bills, as he says several governors have done. For instance, Madigan said attorneys for the House and Senate contend that 45 of 51 amendatory vetoes Gov. Pat Quinn has issued "were not compliant with the Constitution." One, he said, "actually attempted to change a section of an existing statute which was not changed by the underlying bill."

Dawn Clark Netsch, former Democratic state comptroller and candidate for governor, chimed in with another

suggestion: "I would still like to get rid of the restrictions that got built into the Revenue Article, over the protest of many of us who were involved in it. You have the flat-rate requirement [for the state income tax], the 8-to-5 ratio [linking the corporate income tax rate with the personal income tax rate] and some of those things. ... I don't think that's going very far, though."

Former delegate Ray Garrison recalled that the flat income tax was inserted because delegates feared that voters who opposed the graduated tax would reject the entire Constitution. "We took the safe side," he said, adding that convention president Samuel Witwer "was mainly interested in getting a document that would pass."

Nowlan then brought up the sticky subject of how to fund public schools. During the convention, some delegates believed that financing schools through a statewide method, such as the income tax, solved inequities that occur when schools are funded mainly through local property taxes. But local property tax support for schools stayed



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in the document — although the Constitution does add, “The state has the primary responsibility for financing the system of public education” — and arguments over the issue have ensued ever since.

“I’ve done a lot of thinking about this over 40 years,” said former delegate Malcolm Kamin, who was a member of the education committee at the convention. “I’ve come to the conclusion that you can’t really dictate an effective public financing system unless the public is behind it. The major problem with funding education in the state of Illinois is that the Chicago suburbs really don’t want to change their advantages. And that was the thing that undid what was proposed 40 years ago.”

He added that funding education entirely through a statewide method essentially would result in a state school system. The congressional legislation that created the state of Illinois, Kamin said, dedicated a portion of every township for a public school, thereby urging local support. “Anything that smacks of real state control flies in the face of our tradition of local education.”

Suggestions then turned toward the current system of drawing legislative districts every 10 years. It usually results in the secretary of state pulling a name out of a hat, with the chosen person’s political party controlling the commission that draws district maps. Netsch said she recently reviewed early redistricting discussions, and “it’s not as nutty as everybody is representing it.” Convention delegates believed the drawings “would never have to be used because it was just too much of a crap shoot for both parties.” She said the delegates also never expected that the two names chosen from different political parties would be “really bitter partisans. ... It was thought to be the choice of two people who would really try to resolve the differences.”

“What’s happened over 40 years,” Madigan elaborated, “is that nobody has felt the compulsion to compromise.” A current proposed constitutional amendment would

allow the House and Senate to each map their own districts with no relationship to the districts of the other chamber. Now, each Senate district entirely contains two House districts. Madigan said if that proposal became law, legislative districts would meander all over Illinois, “but it clearly makes things easier if each chamber can do its own.”

Reunion organizer Ann Lousin, a former Con-Con staffer and now a professor at John Marshall Law School, which co-sponsored the event along with the Union League Club of Chicago, said afterward that 19 of the about 40 living convention delegates attended. “It was a very congenial group. These are people who used to go after each other hammer and tong. ... They worked together, they got mad, then they came back together and they compromised. I don’t see that [among current politicians].”

Lousin, who has organized six or seven similar reunions over the years (two more were coordinated by others), pointed to such topics as education funding, redistricting and election versus appointment of judges that dominate the headlines 40 years after Con-Con. “Some of the issues delegates could not agree on are still issues today.”

She says she hopes to continue to stage events throughout the coming year that will be connected to the 40th anniversary of the Constitutional Convention, and that she plans to assemble another reunion next fall.

\* \* \*

Please welcome back to our staff Jamey Dunn, who did a great job as an intern for us during last spring’s legislative session. She earned her master’s degree in public affairs reporting from the University of Illinois Springfield and has a bachelor’s in speech communication from Southern Illinois University Carbondale. She has assumed the role of our visiting Statehouse bureau chief.

Dana Heupel can be reached at [heupel.dana@uis.edu](mailto:heupel.dana@uis.edu).

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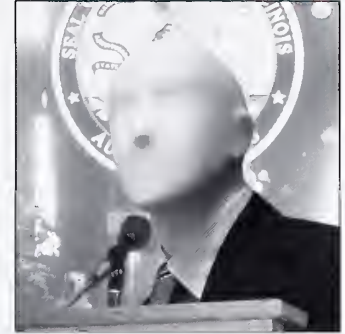
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KES—



## State continues to plan new facilities but has no money to operate them

by Kurt Erickson

On the day before Veterans Day, Gov. Pat Quinn held an event in Chicago to announce the site for a new state-run nursing home for veterans.

The facility, to be paid for by the long-awaited capital construction program that lawmakers approved last summer, would be the state's fifth veterans' home and the first in the Chicago area.

The announcement made sense from a political standpoint. Quinn is running for governor, and the project will create hundreds of jobs in the construction industry.

The announcement also highlighted one of Quinn's pet issues, veterans, and for good measure, was aimed at a major bloc of voters where no current state home for veterans exists.

Few doubt the governor's sincerity on the issue of veterans and their families. He has attended more than 200 military funerals. He invited the mother of a deceased soldier to stand with him when he announced his bid for a full term as governor.

But his announcement of the new veterans' home comes with a caveat that Quinn left unmentioned.

Although a lot could change between now and the time the Chicago nursing home is built, the state doesn't appear to have the financial wherewithal to actually open such a facility.

In reality, all Quinn might have announced was the construction of yet another empty state-owned building.

*Although a lot could change between now and the time the Chicago nursing home is built, the state doesn't appear to have the financial wherewithal to actually open such a facility.*

Here's why: Because of the state's budget problems, the Illinois Department of Veterans' Affairs already has empty beds at its existing facilities.

It's not because there aren't enough veterans to fill those beds. It's because the state hasn't had the will to spend the money to provide adequate staffing for the facilities already in existence.

Take the veterans' home in LaSalle as an example. An expansion of the facility was completed several years ago, bringing its capacity to 200 beds, up from 120. But, until this year, there wasn't money in the state budget to hire staff for the added beds.

Quinn visited the LaSalle facility in March to say his budget proposal finally earmarked enough money to get the facility running at its full capacity. Yet nearly halfway through the fiscal year, with his budget proposal mostly ignored by lawmakers, only 10 of the new beds have been filled, according to figures provided by the Illinois Department of Veterans' Affairs.

The agency continues to interview prospective nurses and other staffers in hopes of bringing enough employees on board, said spokeswoman Sabrina Miller.

Examples of Illinois' anti-Field of Dreams mentality dot the landscape of the Land of Lincoln.

On the far northwestern horizon of the Prairie State, a maximum-security prison has sat virtually empty since it was completed in 2001.

It wasn't left unused by the state for a lack of inmates. The prison system is overcrowded, no matter how they count things at the Illinois Department of Corrections. The prison in Thomson was mothballed because none of the leaders of state government could figure out a financial way to truly open the state-of-the-art lockup.

The economic downturn after the 2001 terrorist attacks was the first excuse. Lack of political will by the Blagojevich administration was the second excuse.

Four governors after the prison in Carroll County was first conceived, Quinn announced in November that the federal government might finally take it off the state's hands to house suspected terrorists. In mid-December, President Barack Obama's administration announced it was proceeding with the sale.

About 175 miles south of Thomson, in Logan County, there are four 10-bed homes for developmentally disabled residents that sit completely unused. They



were supposed to become home to people displaced by the closure of Lincoln Developmental Center two governors ago.

No one can decide what to do with the fully furnished facilities. Local leaders have pressed for several years for the state to use the vacant homes — as well as other buildings on the 100-acre Lincoln Developmental Center campus — but have gotten no bites from either Blagojevich or Quinn. The facilities sit empty, gathering mold, an investment of tax dollars slowly sinking back into the earth.

In Springfield, just blocks away from the Capitol, sits another monument to malaise — Southern Illinois University School of Medicine's year-old Simmons-Cooper Cancer Institute building. The \$21.5 million facility is empty and unused because the state ran out of money to finish it.

Based on a review of the statewide capital construction bill, these types of examples could multiply in the coming years if Illinois doesn't change course.

The list of projects being funded by higher booze taxes, video gambling and added fees on motorists include the possible expansion of the veterans' home in Anna — a project Quinn is likely to hail and promote at some point in his bid for a full term in office.

Universities across Illinois also are in line to get state funds for massive building projects, despite the effects of a state budget situation that has left them worrying about making payroll, curtailing hiring and imposing other cost-cutting measures.

At Western Illinois University, for example, president Al Goldfarb recently sent out a letter to the campus community calling for everyone to clamp down on spending because the state is so late in paying its bills.

Yet, at same time the university is worrying about its ability to pay its existing employees, the capital program contains a \$42 million earmark to build a new WIU campus in Rock Island.

The capital bill also contains what amounts to billions of dollars worth of irony.

For example, one earmark is for \$75,000 to upgrade a swimming pool in Taylorville. Yet, Taylorville is among dozens of prison towns across Illinois complaining that the state is months behind in paying its water bill.

***Taxpayers are forking over tens of millions of dollars in overtime costs because the state doesn't have enough money to hire the proper number of guards and cooks. Yet, the capital bill provides for more than \$7 million to start planning a new cellblock at Stateville Correctional Center.***

While those empty buildings at Lincoln Developmental Center continue to attract mold spores, the capital plan calls for spending \$200,000 to upgrade group homes for the disabled in Chicago.

The problem is endemic across all state agencies.

At the Illinois Department of Corrections, taxpayers are forking over tens of millions of dollars in overtime costs because the state doesn't have enough money to hire the proper number of guards and cooks. Yet, the capital bill provides for more than \$7 million to start planning a new cellblock at Stateville Correctional

Center and a health facility to treat inmates who are ill.

You can't blame politicians for wanting to cut ribbons on new projects, especially during an election year. But they need to be asked a follow-up question in every instance:

Until you figure out how to operate what we've already got, isn't this new building, literally, just an empty promise?

The politicians will have an answer: By putting thousands of people to work building things, the state could see a bump in revenue from the added income taxes those workers will generate. That, combined with a tax increase and cuts to other programs, could help re-balance the state's ledger, enabling the state to operate all these things it plans to build.

For now, however, the situation represents a window into the soul of Illinois voters.

After the scandals tied to the state's two previous governors, Illinoisans don't trust the politicians to adequately manage their money.

So, rather than pay higher income taxes to finance the largely unseen bureaucracy, we'll hold our noses and pay higher taxes if it results in something concrete that we can see. Even if it is an empty shell. □

*Guest columnist Kurt Erickson is the state Capitol bureau chief for Lee Enterprises.*



***Thomson, a maximum-security prison in northwestern Illinois, has sat virtually empty since it was completed in 2001. The federal government announced plans to buy it in mid-December.***



# BRIEFLY

## LEGISLATIVE CHECKLIST

*The Illinois General Assembly's spring legislative session starts this month. Lawmakers could consider new measures to legalize civil unions of same-sex partners, legalize and regulate the use of medical marijuana and codify stricter rules for transferring violent inmates to the state's super-maximum security prison.*

*Legislators returned to the Capitol in late October for their annual fall veto session. They did not address the state's budget deficit, projected to exceed \$12 billion, and expect to consider new revenue sources during the spring session. In the meantime, here is a list of bills that the legislature approved, denied or delayed until this spring session.*

### **Campaign finance**

**SB 1466** Individuals, businesses, unions, associations and political committees would be limited in the amount of money they could donate to candidates each election cycle, under a measure approved by both chambers along partisan lines. Legislative leaders and political parties, however, are only limited in the amount they can contribute to candidates in primary elections, not general elections. While reform advocates considered the limits on top political party officials as a compromise and a starting point, Republicans denounced the bill as “business as usual” by consolidating political power in the hands of the few.

In addition to contribution limits, which would be applied on a graduated scale depending on the entity donating and the candidate's race, the reform package also aims to improve transparency and enforcement. Candidates would have to report contributions and expenditures four times a year, as opposed to the current twice a year. Donations of \$1,000 or more would have to be reported within two to five business days year round. The Illinois State Board of Elections would gain new ability to conduct random audits and investigate potential violations. A task force would study the effectiveness of the

implementation of the new law, as well as the feasibility of public funding of political campaigns.

### **Recall amendment**

**HJRC 31** As part of the fallout from the impeachment of then-Gov. Rod Blagojevich, voters will be asked on the November ballot whether to change the state Constitution to give them the power to remove a sitting governor. Placing the referendum on the ballot required legislative approval, which was granted in August. At least 60 percent of voters in the 2010 general election would have to vote “yes” to amend the Constitution. If approved, individuals seeking to remove a governor in the future would have to gather a certain number of signatures (15 percent of the votes cast in the last gubernatorial election) before voters could be asked whether to remove the sitting governor. Also, 20 House members and 10 Senate members from both political parties would have to sign off on a recall proposal from citizens.

### **MAP grant funding**

**SB 1180** Gov. Pat Quinn restored \$205 million to the Monetary Award Program, which offers financial aid to nearly 138,000 low-income college students. As part of more than \$2 billion in budget cuts this fiscal year, Quinn initially did not fully fund the so-called MAP grants to cover an entire school year. The administration authorized spending for only one semester, creating panic among higher education students who rely on the grants. Quinn toured the state to pressure the legislature to approve restoration of the funding, and the General Assembly complied in October. However, neither the governor nor the legislature approved a way to pay for the \$205 million needed. Quinn said he would seek new revenue sources after January, when fewer votes would be necessary for approval. The move comes on the heels of an updated projection that overall state revenue will be nearly \$900 million less than anticipated.

### **Legislative pay raises**

**SB 2090** Legislators last spring approved a measure that would change the way legislators get pay raises and would require them to take four unpaid furlough days, as well as forfeit their annual cost-of-living raises this fiscal year. Quinn changed the measure to permanently end automatic cost-of-living raises. The Senate overrode the governor's change. If the House does the same, the original changes would take effect. If the House does not agree to override the governor's changes, the entire bill would die, and none of the changes would take effect.

### **Cemetery oversight**

**SB 1471** All cemetery owners, managers and employees, including those hired to trim trees or maintain cemetery grounds, would have to register with the state and carry identification cards to prove their clearance to work on site. Owners, managers and all employees who had direct contact with customers also would have to go a step further by becoming licensed by the state and subjecting themselves to criminal background checks. The bill is in response to regulatory gaps exposed during the Burr Oak Cemetery scandal last summer (see *Illinois Issues*, September 2009, page 13). Bodies buried in the historic African-American cemetery in Alsip were moved and dumped into a mass grave in an alleged scheme to resell gravesites. The bill would consolidate all regulatory oversight to the Illinois Department of Financial and Professional Regulation and require cemetery maps, plats and burial records to be maintained and publicly available. Family burial grounds, inactive cemeteries and cemeteries smaller than 2 acres would be exempt from the new rules.

### **Cook County Board**

**HB 4625** Cook County Board members would need fewer votes to override a board president's veto. If signed into law by the governor, overriding the Cook



County Board president would require a three-fifths majority rather than a four-fifths majority, or 11 out of 17 votes rather than 14 votes. It would be effective immediately, contrary to Cook County Board President Todd Stroger's wishes that it would be effective after his current term ends in December 2010.



**HB 4624** An effort to repeal Cook County's penny-on-the-dollar sales tax increase failed during veto session. Board President Todd Stroger enacted the sales tax hike from 0.75 percent to 1.75 percent in February 2008. Estimated to generate about \$400 million for county coffers, the tax has been criticized for making Chicago's total sales tax rate one of the highest in the nation. County board members have repeatedly tried to repeal the tax increase over Stroger's veto but have failed to meet the four-fifths majority required.



### **Free rides for seniors**

**SB 941** All senior citizens, regardless of income, will continue to receive free rides on mass transit systems throughout the state. An attempt to roll back the program started by former Gov. Rod Blagojevich failed to advance in the Senate. The bill would have ended the free rides for seniors age 65 and older other than for those who are low-income and qualify for the state's Circuit Breaker program. It would have reportedly saved \$37 million for cash-strapped transit agencies in the Chicago area.



### **Governor's budget address**

**HB 1409** Legislators prevented the governor from moving his annual budget address to March, which he requested to give more time for his new budget director, David Vaught, to assess the state's fiscal status. The governor must propose a budget in February unless the legislature changes the date.



### **GOP leadership**

**SB 600** The Illinois Republican Party will not have to change the way it elects its State Central Committee members, which are internally elected. A measure to change the system to allow the public to elect committee members failed to gain the supermajority of votes needed in the House. Fewer votes would be needed if the issue comes up again after this month.

*Bethany Jaeger*

## **NEW LAWS**

*The following laws were among those enacted January 1.*

### **Driving safety**

**HB 71 and HB 72** It is now illegal to send text messages while driving. A related law makes it illegal to use a cell phone while driving through a school speed zone or in a highway construction zone unless a hands-free device is used. Drivers will still be allowed to use a cell phone for emergency purposes.

### **Speed limits**

**HB 3956** Trucks are now allowed to travel along rural interstates at 65 miles per hour. Previously, a speed limit of 55 mph existed. Former Gov. Rod Blagojevich had used his veto power on three occasions to block similar legislation.

### **Public access**

**SB 189** Public bodies are now held to higher standards when withholding information from the public. A specialized lawyer, called a public access counselor, is now able to subpoena information. The counselor, which is housed in the attorney general's office, is also able to issue binding opinions on whether documents and other information being requested must be released. Also, courts can impose fines ranging from \$2,400 to \$5,000 against public bodies that deliberately fail to comply with the state's Freedom of Information Act.

### **Sex offenders**

**HB 1314** Registered sex offenders can now be charged with a Class 4 felony if they join a social networking site. The purpose is to keep offenders off such Web sites as MySpace and Facebook. The crime would carry a one- to three-year prison term.

**For updated news see the  
Illinois Issues Web site at  
<http://illinoisissues.uis.edu>**

## **Consumer protection law takes on 'cramming'**

An amendment to a consumer protection law prohibits companies from adding unwanted services to telephone bills.

The practice, known as cramming, happens when a third party responsible for billing for phone companies throws on additional services that a consumer had not requested.

"Cramming is just another word for fraud," says Citizens Utility Board executive director David Kolata. "Cramming is when unscrupulous companies put charges on your phone bill for services that you didn't order and don't want."

Kolata said his organization has seen a big increase in complaints.

State Rep. John Bradley, a Marion Democrat, says he and his wife were victims of cramming. They turned the bill over to Kolata after finding questionable charges. "They look like legitimate charges, but actually it's a third party that places those items on your bills."

The fraudulent charges are often listed as enhanced Internet or voicemail, Kolata says.

**Senate Bill 1421** amends the Consumer Fraud and Deceptive Business Practices Act by prohibiting third-party providers from charging consumers on their phone bill unless charges and terms have been clearly disclosed and the consumer has agreed to purchase the service in question.

The law, signed by Gov. Pat Quinn in late November, allows the attorney general to seek a \$50,000 fine for each violation of the consumer fraud act, says Natalie Bauer, deputy press secretary for Attorney General Lisa Madigan. "The attorney general also can ask a judge to force the provider to pay consumers back any money they lost, among other penalties."

*Maureen Foertsch McKinney*

## Fish kill aims to stop Asian carp

Last month, state officials conducted a fish kill in the Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal near Romeoville to determine whether the invasive Asian carp had managed to get beyond an electric barrier installed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Of the tens of thousands of fish killed, biologists found just one 22-inch Asian carp below the barrier in the \$3.1 million project carried out by the Illinois Department of Natural Resources.

"It was one of the largest, if not the largest, fish kills in the state, but it is a common tool used in fish management to control invasive species," says Chris McCloud, spokesman for the department. "It was an important decision because of what's at stake."

Asian carp, also known as bighead and silver carp, can grow to 100 pounds and eat up to 40 percent their body weight every day. Silvers, which are about half the size of bigheads, will jump in the air when motorboats pass.

Biologists fear the Asian carp will disrupt the Great Lakes' ecology by consum-

ing the bottom of the food chain and crowding out native species, as they have done along great swaths of the Mississippi and Illinois rivers.

A toxin fatal to fish but not humans or other aquatic life was poured into a six-mile area near Lockport. The fish kill was timed to a planned maintenance shutdown of one of the electric barriers by the Army Corps of Engineers.

A day and a half later, a detoxifying agent was added to the canal to contain the poison to the designated area. The dead fish either sank or were taken to a landfill.

The Michigan attorney general announced in early December his office would file suit against the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the state of Illinois and Chicago's sewer authority to close the century-old canal that connects Lake Michigan to the Mississippi River watershed.

The suit seeks to protect Michigan's \$7 billion lake-related fishing, leisure and tourism industry. However, more than



*Bighead Asian carp*

14.6 million tons of such commodities as iron, steel, gravel and building materials annually move through the canal, according to the American Waterways Operators. As of mid-December, no lawsuit had been filed.

*Beverley Scobell*

## Sesquicentennial churches recognized

This year, the Illinois State Historical Society will recognize churches that have been in existence for 150 or more years.

"We have an interest in all aspects of Illinois history. This is an opportunity for us to celebrate that history and our church history," says William Furry, the executive director of the Illinois State Historical Society.

The Sesquicentennial Church Awards will be held in March in conjunction with the 31st annual Illinois History Symposium held at Wheaton College, which is also celebrating its sesquicentennial. The theme of the symposium is "Abolition: The Spark That Ignited the Second American Revolution." The decision to focus on sesquicentennial churches came about for two reasons, says Furry. First, it will soon be the 150th anniversary of the beginning of the Civil War. Secondly, "the churches that existed 150 years ago were part of a culture that knew slavery. Many churches often played a role in abolition."

One example is Westminster Presbyterian Church in Springfield. The congregation formed in 1835 as the Second Presbyterian Church, when 30 members of the First Presbyterian Church left to form an abolitionist church. "We have documentation that members of the congregation were involved in the Underground Railroad," says the Rev. Lonnie Lee, pastor of Westminster. "The congregation was strongly opposed to slavery, which was an extremist view at the time. Many people that

joined the church shared that view, and the church provided a place of safety where they could talk about their views." Second Presbyterian Church became Westminster Presbyterian Church in 1920, when the congregation decided to adopt a more traditional name for the church, according to Lee.

Furry estimates that about 500 churches throughout the state would meet the sesquicentennial requirement. Those include Holy Family Catholic Church in Cahokia, the oldest continuous Catholic parish in the nation. The first Mass at the location was held December 8, 1698, and the church thrived as a center for missionary work, according to William Day, a parishioner of the church. In 1799, members of the congregation built a log cabin church for Mass to be held. The church, now listed on the U.S. National Register of Historic Places, is used for special occasions. Today, the parish has a congregation of about 400 members, says Day, and a parochial school.

To qualify for the sesquicentennial award, interested churches must submit an application, due January 15, and provide evidence that supports their claim. Acceptable documentation can include marriage or baptismal records, old city directories, the official charter grant and early church board meeting minutes. The application and more information can be found at [www.historyillinois.org](http://www.historyillinois.org).

*Melissa Weissert*



## Prof works to create research center after cancer diagnosis

When Daniel Dyer, an organic chemist at Southern Illinois University Carbondale since 1998, was diagnosed with brain cancer earlier this year, he turned a negative into a positive by making plans to establish an endowed professorship and research center where he and a team of researchers can focus their research on cancer and brain chemistry.

"The name of the research center is tentatively the Southern Illinois Institute for Brain Chemistry," says Dyer, who is a professor in the Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry. "Our research will consist of three tiers: cancer research, new methods and techniques for MRIs, which are important in identifying cancer, and tissue engineering, such as growing nerve fibers."

Dyer began experiencing symptoms, such as disrupted sleep patterns and difficulty spelling words and speaking, in early winter. He initially attributed the problems to new parenthood and fatigue, but in July, an MRI identified a brain tumor in the area of the brain that controls speech and fine motor skills. He underwent an operation to remove the tumor in August and had chemotherapy

and radiation therapy that concluded in late October.

"We're in the beginning stages of fundraising," says Dyer, who plans to work with the SIU Foundation to organize more fundraising efforts in the spring. "We need to raise \$6 million to endow the center, establish a research staff and get lab space, but we also need to raise money for chemicals and equipment, too."

"Having this research center would be a great benefit for the university, and we would be thrilled to see Dr. Dyer achieve his vision," says Gary Kinsel, chair of the Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry. "We're all keeping our fingers crossed that he beats this thing and that everything will work out for the best for him."

While he plans to focus initial research on glioblastoma multiforme, the form of brain cancer he has, Dyer says he ultimately hopes to identify proteins that play a role in regulating the growth of cancer cells and tumors, which could potentially help establish a cure.

"Almost everyone's body has a different reaction to cancer," Dyer explains. "We're searching for a cure, but it's a long ways away."

Nicole Harbour

Photograph by Jeff Garner, courtesy of Southern Illinois University Carbondale



*Daniel Dyer works in his laboratory on campus. Dyer, recently diagnosed with glioblastoma multiforme, wants to establish an endowed professorship and research center where he and others can focus their research on brain chemistry and cancer.*

## Suitcases for kids

George Schneider is always on the lookout for new or used suitcases. Schneider and his wife, Carol, often spend their Friday and Saturday mornings traveling to yard sales and rummage sales looking for the items. Schneider, president of the Collinsville Noon Lions Club, collects the bags for the club's "Suitcases for Kids" project, which sends luggage to children in foster homes.

The project began a little more than a year and a half ago when Schneider attended a Lions Club convention. A member from a branch in California spoke about a project that involved collecting suitcases and backpacks for children in foster care. She explained that when children were removed from their homes, most of their belongings were placed in trash bags. "My wife and I decided this was a good project for us," says Schneider.

Schneider decided to test the project before introducing it to the club. He went to a church rummage sale in Maryville. After Schneider explained his mission, the pastor gave him 10 suitcases. "I was so pumped I could hardly stand it." Later, he stopped at a yard sale and was given two more suitcases. Soon, Schneider had collected about 30 bags, which he stored in his garage. He also contacted local agencies to find a place to give the donations.

Barbara Rhodes, head librarian of the Collinsville Memorial Public Library and a Lions member, offered storage space and a drop-off point for the bags. She also helped make flyers to spread the word. "This project has energized the club. It has brought in a lot of young people who want to help," says Schneider.

Since then, the club has collected more than 1,600 suitcases and backpacks. The bags are distributed throughout Madison and St. Clair counties and St. Louis. Children's Home + Aid in Granite City has been one of the recipients of the donated bags. "Kids come to us in desperate, sometimes traumatic, situations. The suitcases are given to children in foster care, or children who are homeless or runaways," says Renae Koller, regional vice president. "These bags give the kids a chance to take something with them from what they are leaving behind."

Melissa Weissert



## BRIEFLY

### New park is accessible as well as sustainable

Like many parks, it started with the donation of land, this from the descendants of a Sangamon County pioneer. But when Edwin Watts Southwind Park in Springfield opens next summer, it will have grown from an idea of a traditional park to the reality of a totally accessible, environmentally friendly space to enjoy the outdoors.

Located four miles south of the state Capitol on Second Street, the 80-acre park features a 2.5-mile, tree-lined pathway that encircles a 4.5-acre lake connecting a sensory garden, a butterfly garden and an 8-acre lawn, with picnic shelters and playground equipment along the way. They are anchored by a 15,000-square-foot pavilion that will serve as a welcome center and recreation program area.

The walkway, paved with colored cement in a pattern that aids people with cognitive limitations, also includes textures that give clues to guide dogs. The surface will enable those in wheelchairs or using other walking aids to reach all areas of the park. A specially built tram will accommodate wheelchairs.

Funded by a \$200,000 grant from the Kellogg Foundation's Access to Recreation and matched by the Springfield Park District, the park's "way-finding navigation" system includes GPS hand-held devices that will provide visitors with a more personal version of the "You are here" signs.

Also part of the navigation is a TDD, telecommunication for the deaf, system and a call system to reach park staff. Signage will use universal symbols in bright colors and large print, as well as in Braille.

"This is a new idea for Springfield, very unique for any of the parks in the system," says Mike Stratton, executive director of the Springfield Park District. "You may see [these features] in the northern part of the state, but you don't see a lot in central Illinois."

In addition to accessibility, the designers of Southwind Park added such environmental features as geothermal, solar and wind energy to offset costs. Solar panels generate enough electricity to operate the lights in the shelters. A stormwater drainage system recirculates water to keep



*The first permanent building in Southwind Park will serve as a welcome center and space for park district recreational programs.*

the lake full, and excess water is filtered by wetland plants in bioswales before it returns to Lake Springfield. An 84-foot wind turbine will provide energy and circulate water for the rambling creek that feeds the lake. The rock-bottomed creek is also another play feature.

Erin's Pavilion is named in memory of the daughter of J. Garth "Butch" Elzea, a local businessman and volunteer who spearheaded the park project and donated funds for the building. It exceeds the Americans with Disabilities Act standards for accessibility and achieves the highest LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) certification for its sustainability features.

It is on target to receive a LEED platinum rating — one of just 80 in the world — from the United States Green Building Council, a nonprofit that supports construction that uses fewer natural resources and provides healthier living and working environments.

"When we started [planning the park], we asked, 'How can we make it so everyone can use it and feel equal and inclusive,'" says Elzea, whose daughter Erin had several physical challenges. "Now it is a national model for how to do something not only for disability inclusiveness, but it's also a national model for environ-

mental construction."

The estimated cost for the park is \$16 million, with all but about \$1 million already raised through park district funds, grants, cash and in-kind contributions from local businesses.

In the plans for the future are two more buildings, an indoor recreation/sports complex and a children's museum. Three swimming pools and an indoor soccer facility also are on the drawing boards to be part of the recreation complex. The Kidzeum of Health & Science ([www.kidzeum.org](http://www.kidzeum.org)), a nonprofit organization partnering with the park district, is in the fundraising stage, but supporters would like to break ground within the next two years.

With nearly 39,000 children under the age of 15 living in Sangamon County, and more than 154,000 within a 60-mile radius of Springfield, supporters expect the Kidzeum to be a popular draw to the park and a boost for Springfield's tourism industry. "It's conceivable that we'll have 1,000 people a day in the park. This is a destination," says Elzea.

"It's a park for all people, but I hesitate to call it a park. Park is too general a term for what we've created here."

*Beverley Scobell*

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# Oh, Oprah

Chicago has reaped countless benefits as home base to the *Oprah Winfrey Show* for the past 24 years. That may make it hard to say goodbye

by John Carpenter

The heaping bowl of jambalaya arrived quickly on the gray Formica counter at Wishbone's. The lunch crowd buzzed around me — mostly business folks with a few housewives sprinkled in. Wait a minute. Business people? Housewives? Here at the corner of Washington and Morgan?

When I moved to Chicago in 1987, this bustling neighborhood was a wasteland of abandonment and dying industry. A restaurant on this spot, if it somehow could have miraculously appeared, would have been patronized more by prostitutes wandering over from under the Lake Street El.

I shook hot sauce onto the steaming entrée and thought about the unassuming television complex just a block behind me; the mecca for female TV watchers by the millions whose high priestess staked this ground when no one else would have it, fertilizing it for urban rebirth. Then, maybe even with a shudder, I entertained a thought that is anathema to most guys with even the faintest delusions of male hipness.

"Oprah," I thought. "Way to go, Oprah."

The Wishbone and everything around it may be the most concrete benefit that Chicago has reaped from the fact that it has been home to the *Oprah Winfrey Show* for the past 24 years. But as the news settles in that the wildly popular television show will tape its last season here next year, dousing its lights while its star, presumably, moves on to other projects

elsewhere, Chicagoans are left to ponder what Oprah has really meant for this city.

Jerry Roper, president and CEO of the Chicagoland Chamber of Commerce, summed up the basics on ABC-7 *News* the night before Oprah's big announcement.

"She is a Chicago icon on the level of Michael Jordan," he said. "What that means to Chicago is, over 25 years, [there have been] a lot of eyeballs on this city. You can't put a price tag on that."

Lee Bey, executive director of the Chicago Area Central Committee and a former deputy chief of staff to Mayor Daley, agrees.

"The three things people talk about when you travel and tell them you are from Chicago are Michael Jordan, Mayor Daley and Oprah," he says.

Daley himself, when he wasn't blaming pesky reporters for driving Winfrey away with questions about her opening show shutdown of Michigan Avenue, was effusive.

"Oprah's presence in Chicago has been a gift for two decades," he said in a statement on November 20, the day of her announcement. "The *Oprah Winfrey Show* has drawn worldwide attention to our city and distinctive energy from it."

*Chicago Sun-Times* columnist Mark Brown says that energy is one of the things he admires about Oprah.

"I'm very impressed by Oprah and what she has created," Brown says. "She's made something out of nothing, or nothing but herself, and created this little economic engine in Chicago."

Chicagoans, even those who may never have watched the show, could claim a certain pride of ownership as they watched her international star rise. Although her early television career followed a typical — albeit accelerated — path through smaller markets such as Nashville and Baltimore, her big break came here. She landed the job as host of ABC-TV's *AM Chicago* in January of 1984.

It is easy to look back on a tape of her first show and say that her potential was clear. Hindsight is, after all, 20-20. But watching her standing on State Street, it must have been clear that she was more than a twittering talking head, and not merely because she was not blonde and *not skinny*.

"Good morning everybody," she said confidently, with the tone of one who knows they are where they belong, even if others wonder. "I'm Oprah Winfrey, the new host of *AM Chicago*, and I'm thrilled to be here."

By 1986, dominating local ratings in her time slot, the *Oprah Winfrey Show* began its national syndication run. She has remained the top draw, cashing in on her personality and the fact that viewers saw something other than the typical beauty queen TV host. When Oprah kvetched about her struggles to lose weight, housewives by the millions nodded in sympathy. Oprah is, and was, part preacher, part teacher, part therapist and part chatty neighbor from across the street. And her massive fame and wealth — *Forbes* estimates her personal fortune at \$2.7 billion — only



seems to intensify the nearly religious devotion of her fans. Look what Oprah did, they seem to think, and she's just like me.

Winfrey's show certainly put the city in a spotlight, or at least basking in the glow that shines on Winfrey. But it isn't merely the size of Oprah's audience that matters — about 7 million viewers daily in the last ratings report — it's the association with her personality. Winfrey doesn't just drive ratings, she is a cultural and marketing force. Not long after Oprah started her book club, publishers realized that sales of her selections would spike so fast that they tried desperately to find out which book she would choose next, so they could print more copies and avoid almost immediate sell-outs. An economics professor at Brigham Young University studied the "Oprah effect" on book sales and determined she had "a bigger impact on the sales of books than anything we have previously seen in literature."

Even Chicago's latest run on the stage of international fame — its role as home to President Barack Obama — has some traces of Oprah on it. The Obama candidacy, and Oprah's endorsement of it, represented the first time Winfrey stepped into the political arena. Two University of Maryland professors studied the impact of her endorsement. Among other things, they mapped book sales increases from Oprah's Book of the Month selections, and correlated those to primary election turnout increases county by county. Their conclusion: Oprah got 1,015,559 votes for Obama in the places they studied. Even rounding this number down slightly, it is still higher than the difference in votes between Obama and Hillary Clinton in those areas. Ironically, the endorsement may have pushed Winfrey's ratings down slightly, as Republican viewers fell away. But she never lost her No. 1 spot in the ratings, which seem to be bouncing back.

More directly in Chicago, though, Oprah brings people here. There is no definitive study of how much economic activity the *Oprah Winfrey Show* creates in Chicago. But even a very simple, decidedly inexpert look at the numbers shows the impact to be significant. Oprah tapes 140 shows in Chicago every year, with a studio audience of 325 for each one. *Oprah Winfrey Show* spokesperson Jamie Goss estimates that about two-thirds of



*Oprah Winfrey traveled to Denmark last September to support Chicago's Olympics bid.*

audience members are traveling to Chicago from out of town. That means about 30,000 tourists every year, coming to see the show. Figure that each one is staying in a hotel — or at least sharing a hotel room — eating a few meals, riding a few cabs and hitting a few stores, and the dollars spent by show attendees quickly pass— \$15 million.

"People plan trips to Chicago just to go see the Oprah show," says Alexandra Brook of Glenview, interviewed while she was doing some Christmas shopping. "You can't tell me they don't shop when they get here, or eat in restaurants and stay in hotels. I'm sure that will be missed."

Mindy Douthit of Wilmette, also out shopping, agrees.

"People consider her part of what is Chicago. She's certainly a tourist attraction. She's like the tall buildings. She's part of the city."

Guy Nickson, co-owner of Wishbone, is in the one place in the city that may see a direct economic impact when Oprah's show is no longer taping across the street. Nickson and his brother opened Wishbone in 1992, just after Harpo Studios opened. It was still very much a dubious neighborhood. But Oprah's choice to set up shop there, and build a state-of-the-art studio,

seemed to give nervous developers permission to test the waters.

"It defined an area in the minds of buyers, where previously it was a no-man's land," said Bey, who has also served as architecture critic for the *Chicago Sun-Times*.

"There's unquantifiable electricity that she brings," Nickson said. "She was a magnet that put us on the map."

Most seem to agree that the West Loop neighborhood has developed to the point that the loss of the show won't hurt too much. And Harpo Studios will still be in business there, taping other shows. As for the city as a whole, the loss will be more psychological and hard to define.

"I think between this and losing the Olympics, people are just feeling a little blue," Nickson said. "Chicagoans have always had that 'second city' mentality."

Bey is philosophical.

"There was a Chicago before Oprah got here," he says. "And there will be a Chicago after she is gone. Maybe it will lose just a little bit of its luster. But it will still be Chicago."

Brown says, "We'll live." □

*John Carpenter, a former Chicago Sun-Times reporter, is a Chicago-based freelance writer.*



# Taking on the world

Illinois' approach to ramping up exports and attracting foreign companies markedly differs from the strategies of its Midwestern neighbors

by Daniel C. Vock

Medical device salesman Jeff Dziura credits the state of Illinois for helping him drive up sales for the Northbrook-based company he works for, selling scar-reducing patches.

In November, Dziura traveled to Düsseldorf, Germany, where the Illinois Office of Trade and Investment helped him connect with potential customers. Medica, the trade show that attracts 130,000 attendees, is the largest medical device convention in the world.

The state picked up part of the tab for Dziura's company, New Medical Technology Inc., and five others to set up exhibitor space. Staff at the state agency's Brussels office worked for months beforehand to identify potential customers and invite them to visit New Medical staff at the trade show.

"It went absolutely fabulously. I'm going to pick up at least another half a dozen distributors in Europe. I walked away with a huge amount of leads and interest. I'm swamped. It's two weeks later, and I haven't gotten through half of my follow-ups yet," Dziura says. In those two weeks back, he had even closed a deal.

Dziura says the state support for small- and medium-size exporters is a little-known secret that more Illinois businesses should learn about.

Indeed, Illinois' efforts to build its economy with foreign help have been under the radar for the last decade.

No Illinois governor has led a trade mission abroad since George Ryan went to Mexico in 2000. The staff at the Chicago headquarters for the state's outreach efforts has shrunk from 32 employees in its heyday in the 1980s to just eight now, thanks to reorganizations and budget cuts. Its strategies have shifted with each administration. And the only time in recent years the state's 10 foreign outposts received much attention was when controversy surrounded a nominee to lead one of them.

Whether by accident or design, state government's approach to ramping up Illinois exports and attracting foreign companies to Illinois is markedly different from strategies used by its Midwestern neighbors. In broad terms, Illinois relies less on high-wattage gubernatorial trips and more on day-to-day contact with foreign businesses.

There's a lot at stake.

"We are at the core of helping to restimulate the economy here in Illinois and the country," says Mary Roberts, the interim managing director of the Illinois Office of Trade and Investment, which oversees the state's global business outreach.

Illinois' diverse economy is tightly linked with the economies in nearly all corners of the globe, whether it's Caterpillar selling tractors in China, farmers growing corn destined for Mexico or Solo Cup exporting beer cups to South Africa.

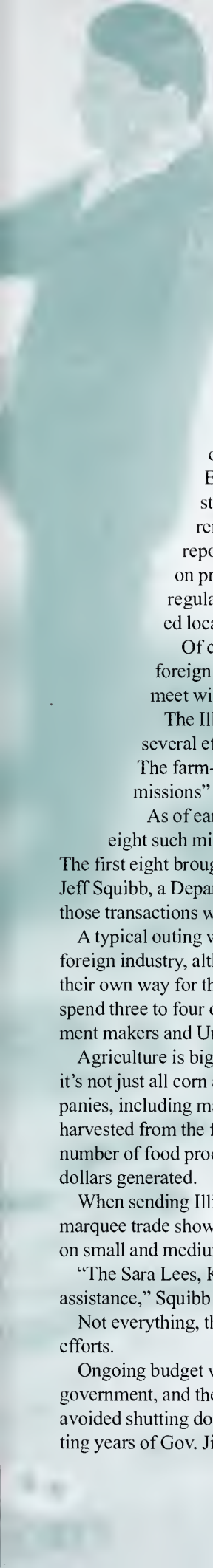
In 2008, Illinois exported \$14.9 billion worth of goods to Canada and an additional \$4.3 billion to Mexico, the Land of Lincoln's next-biggest trading partner. The state also sent \$2.5 billion of merchandise to China, \$2.4 billion to Australia and \$2.4 billion to Japan, according to the U.S. Census Bureau.

Foreign trade is especially important for Illinois' manufacturing sector. Machinery is the state's top export, accounting for 28 percent of Illinois' export total in 2008. In fact, one out of five of Illinois workers in manufacturing depended on exports for their jobs in 2006 (the latest year for which data is available). In the broader sense, that means that 5.7 percent of Illinois' private-sector jobs depended on manufacturing exports.

But it's not just a matter of Illinois products going overseas. According to the Organization for International Investment, American subsidiaries of foreign companies employ 243,100 people in Illinois — the sixth-highest total for any state.

In Illinois the Office of Trade and Investment handles both areas. The agency, part of the state Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, runs the Chicago headquarters and 10 foreign offices in Brussels, Hong Kong, Jerusalem, Johannesburg, Mexico City, New Delhi, Shanghai, Tokyo, Toronto and Warsaw. The Department of Agriculture pursues similar goals on





its own, but it shares staff and offices with DCEO in Mexico City and Hong Kong.

Those trade offices help business leaders such as Dziura make connections overseas. New Medical Technologies benefited both from the state agency's help with the German trade show and from the assistance of its Hong Kong office in lining up an agreement there.

Dziura first worked with the state agency at a previous job in 1996, and he's been impressed with how much the foreign offices have been able to help.

"These people have been in place a long time. They are the in-country experts."

The foreign offices vary in size, using a mix of full-time, part-time and contract workers. Each focuses on three specific industries — the state is especially pushing its biotech and renewable energy sectors these days — and reports back monthly to the Chicago headquarters on progress it has made. The foreign offices also regularly set up seminars and roundtables for invited local businesses.

Of course, the Chicago headquarters also hosts foreign delegations who travel to Illinois and want to meet with government officials.

The Illinois Department of Agriculture also leads several efforts to make inroads with foreign companies. The farm-related agency also organizes "reverse trade missions" for foreign business leaders to visit Illinois.

As of early December, the agriculture agency had led eight such missions in 2009 and had another two planned. The first eight brought in more than \$1 million of purchases, says Jeff Squibb, a Department of Agriculture spokesman. Most of those transactions were for dairy, beef and pork livestock.

A typical outing will include 25 to 50 people from a targeted foreign industry, although from different companies, who pay their own way for the trip. They fly into Chicago or St. Louis and spend three to four days touring the state, visiting farmers, equipment makers and University of Illinois professors, Squibb says.

Agriculture is big business in Illinois, but as Squibb points out, it's not just all corn and soybeans. The state hosts 1,500 food companies, including many that process and sell the food once it's harvested from the field. Illinois is one of the top five states in the number of food processing plants, but it's the top in the country in dollars generated.

When sending Illinoisans abroad or bringing them along to marquee trade shows in the United States, the department focuses on small and medium-size Illinois businesses.

"The Sara Lees, Krafts and ADMs don't need our marketing assistance," Squibb explains.

Not everything, though, is smooth sailing for the state's trade efforts.

Ongoing budget woes continue to affect every corner of state government, and the trade agency is no exception. So far, it has avoided shutting down foreign offices, unlike during the cost-cutting years of Gov. Jim Edgar's administration, when the number

of overseas outposts dropped from 12 to six.

But program money is being cut, and that affects how the agency goes about its business, Roberts says. In 2009, the agency expected to put on 46 overseas conferences and seminars, barely more than a third of the 124 programs the year before. One way the agency is trying to deal with the smaller budgets is to step up its efforts locally, by meeting vendors and visitors at McCormick Place in Chicago to pitch the virtues of the state.

"We are very cognizant of every penny we spend. We are trying to get as high a return on the investment of our dollars as we possibly can," Roberts says. "With that said, international and national trade is a big part of what is going to turn our economy back to a positive, put it back in the black. The opportunities are limitless for the customer base that exists around the world."

To further complicate matters, public scrutiny briefly turned to Illinois foreign efforts when Gov. Pat Quinn tapped a former Blagojevich administration executive to become the "Illinois representative to Africa." Quinn told reporters he had expected Carol Adams, the former secretary of the state Department of Human Services, to have a broader role as an emissary than the typical portfolio of the state's trade representatives.

But dissent grew over giving a high-level former Blagojevich appointee a newly created \$110,000 post while the state is in the throes of a major budget crisis. Eventually, Adams turned down the offer, citing medical concerns.

If there's one glaring hole in Illinois' foreign outreach efforts, though, it has been the lack of any gubernatorial-led foreign trade missions for nearly a decade. Other top state officials, including the director of DCEO, have led trade mission during that time.

Trade missions aren't always a slam dunk politically for governors. They carry the risk of being portrayed as a junket to an exotic land. They also can create a perception that the governor is aloof while the state faces a major crisis. Or a major crisis may erupt when the governor is out of town. Indeed, Virginia Gov. Tim Kaine, a Democrat, was on a trade mission to Japan when he first learned about the Virginia Tech shootings, and Kaine cut his mission short to lead the state during the aftermath of the massacre.

But the trips abroad can pay plenty of dividends. Governors can close major business deals that benefit workers back home, while generating publicity about their home state in key foreign markets.

In November, Wisconsin Gov. Jim Doyle, a Democrat, journeyed to Israel to talk mostly about water technology. Doyle touted his state's vast resources of fresh water, both from the Great Lakes and inland sources. He returned with an agreement with Israeli authorities to coordinate further research efforts, especially regarding water science.

Since Doyle took office in 2003, he has visited China, the Czech Republic, Germany, Ireland, Japan, Mexico, Poland and Spain on trade missions.

Other Midwestern governors, such as Republican Tim Pawlenty of Minnesota and Democrat Jennifer Granholm of Michigan, have also aggressively courted foreign investment with frequent trips abroad.

But perhaps the starkest contrast to Illinois is Indiana. There, Gov. Mitch Daniels, a Republican, has led five foreign trade delegations since first taking office in 2005. Indiana has made great inroads, especially among Japanese companies, in attracting new





*Members of a Taiwanese delegation are signing a letter of intent with the state and state growers to buy Illinois grain. Director General Perry Shue of the Taipei Economic and Cultural Office is seated on the left; Agriculture Director Tom Jennings is seated on the right.*

facilities. Most famously, the Hoosier State beat Illinois, Michigan, Ohio and other states in a competition to land a new 2,000-worker Honda plant in 2006.

Indiana's focus, though, is almost exclusively on luring foreign companies to the state, says Mitch Roob, the head of the Indiana Economic Development Corporation, a state agency. That's true of both the governor's trade missions abroad and of the foreign offices Indiana maintains.

Roob, a former Illinoian, relishes Indiana's victories. Illinois' eastern neighbor has been particularly successful in luring Japanese firms thanks to a decades-old emphasis on Indiana leaders reaching out to that country. In Japan, Indiana is a "fairly well-known commodity," Roob says.

And unlike Illinois, Indiana has not reduced program funding for its trade offices in Beijing, Berlin, London, Sydney, Taipei and Tokyo. Of course, Indiana's budget troubles are significant but nowhere near as severe as those of Illinois.

"We have no God-given right to be successful" in attracting foreign investment, Roob says. "We've got to earn it every day. Part of our earning it every day is to continue, through good times and bad, to manage those critical long-term relationships."

Of course, some of Indiana's success has come at the expense of its Midwestern neighbors. The Honda plant is one obvious example. Indiana won out with the help of tax sweeteners for the automaker, a common tactic used by states when they're being played off each other. The *Indianapolis Star* reported that the incentives Indiana offered to Honda amounted to \$70,750 per worker, presuming the company's expansion plans held up.

Roob says the tax breaks were only a small part of Indiana's sales pitch. Logistics and Indiana's business-friendly environment more likely carried the day, he says.

But would it make sense to think more regionally to prevent the sort of bidding wars that result when states compete with each other? Illinois, Indiana and Michigan might all benefit, for example, if one state landed the next auto factory but suppliers in the other two provided the parts.

There seems to be some support for that idea, at least in theory. But in practice, regional efforts tend to be limited and focus on promoting exports.

"The competition [for Illinois], really, is the coastal states. It's the same case for our neighbors here in the Midwest," says Roberts, the head of the Illinois trade agency. "So if we have more of a regional approach, where we all are promoting the Midwest more, the more people that come to Illinois, the more people that get to Indiana and then get to Wisconsin."

But joint trade offices operated by the Council of Great Lakes Governors in emerging markets focus almost exclusively on promoting exports. That's in part to avoid conflicts when the states that take part in the effort — Minnesota, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin — compete against each other for a new factory or facility.

Roob, from Indiana, says no one's convinced him yet that a cooperative Midwestern effort is the way to go.

"We've worked very hard to create a cost-effective environment here in Indiana over the last 20 years. Diluting that into states that have not been as parsimonious with their taxpayers' money now that times are tough doesn't seem to us to be a particularly good bargain," he says.

The one missing player in all of this, especially in the drive to bring more foreign investment, is the federal government.

Traditionally, American states and localities have taken the lead in trying to attract foreign capital, whereas most of the United States' competitors coordinate their efforts nationally. Indeed, there was no federal agency responsible for persuading companies abroad to locate in the United States until 2007.

Now, Invest in America, an effort under the jurisdiction of the U.S. Commerce Department, promotes foreign investment in America. But it doesn't take sides in contests between states for new offices or factories. The agency is, in the words of director Aaron Brickman, "geographically neutral."

Before the creation of the new office, Brickman says, "states were competing against nations and doing a good job at it."

The problem, Brickman explains, is that investors often expect the same sort of system they have at home. And for most foreign investors, that meant a federal effort that complemented the local bids to attract new business.

One of the goals of the nationwide effort is to make sure foreign companies don't overlook the United States simply because they don't have sufficient information to judge whether the country would make a good fit.

The new federal effort is just one example of how the game of global outreach is changing to include more players and the emergence of stronger competition.

When thinking of how Illinois will adapt to the changes, Roberts says she is reminded of a quote often attributed to Charles Darwin: "It is not the strongest of the species that survives, nor the most intelligent, but rather the one most adaptable to change."

Illinois needs to respond to changes in the global marketplace, including the rise of China and India as both potential competitors and lucrative markets, she argues.

"Our competition isn't necessarily our neighbor next door to us, it's the world. Illinois companies are competing against the world." □

*Daniel C. Vock is a reporter for Washington, D.C.-based Stateline.org.*



# All about the budget

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The upcoming legislative session promises to have a central theme

by John Patterson

*"Same as it ever was, same as it ever was, same as it ever was, same as it ever was." — Talking Heads, Once in a Lifetime.*

When Illinois lawmakers return to the Capitol to embark on their 2010 spring session, they'll find new laptop computers. It is perhaps the only truly new item competing for their attention in the coming months.

Their legislative agenda is a burgeoning plate of political leftovers chock full of issues put off and punted in recent years, each snowballing the consequences for taxpayers and those who rely on state services or funding.

And so this session begins where the last left off, with the state budget — a financial plan thus far "balanced" by a series of loans and delayed payments and now predicted to be awash in a sea of red ink potentially exceeding \$12 billion by the time July rolls around. How, or if, lawmakers tackle the budget is the central focus of the session, ultimately dictating how education, health care and other areas fare.

"I'm not a big one issue kind of guy. Public policy is a pretty complex thing," says Ralph Martire, executive director of the Chicago-based Center for Tax and Budget Accountability. "That said, this is a one-issue session. You've got a \$13 billion revenue shortfall in what is supposed to be about a \$26 billion budget. That's 50 percent, as I do math. They can't beg, borrow or steal their way around it."

Not that they haven't tried.

The current budget was "balanced" by

borrowing \$3 billion to make employee pension payments because there was no consensus on raising taxes or massive spending cuts. Now that \$3 billion pension responsibility will be back — and will have grown — along with payments on last year's borrowing, all while the billions in federal stimulus money that propped up education and health care budgets is gone. Economic indicators provide little hope for a quick recovery or even an indication that the bottom has been reached.

The message, lawmakers say, to school districts, colleges, universities, human service providers and others who rely on the state is be happy if you get what you had before.

Behind the scenes, lawmakers and political observers are already looking ahead to the optimistically scheduled May 7 end of this spring session before it's even begun. The question is whether the state's financial situation has indeed become so dire that a majority of lawmakers will support a tax increase, or if some scheme of short-term budgeting, borrowing and stalled payments will again buy elected officials more time, specifically, until after the November elections.

It's a refrain political observers have heard repeatedly as conspiracies and excuses run rampant regarding what's going to happen with the budget and taxes.

First it was the early 2009 impeachment and ouster of Gov. Rod Blagojevich that was supposed to lead to serious budgeting and problem solving — if not clear the

decks for an income tax increase.

"Then, when the legislature didn't deal with the situation in the spring, there was some talk it would deal with the situation after [candidate] filing time, when the lawmakers would know whether they had primary competition and the strength of what competition they might have," says Mike Lawrence, former spokesman for Republican Gov. Jim Edgar and the retired executive director of the Paul Simon Public Policy Institute at Southern Illinois University Carbondale.

But that didn't pan out either.

"Then we were told it would happen after the primary," says Lawrence. "You know, there's always an election nearby in Illinois."

Heading into this legislative session, all eyes turn to the Illinois House and Speaker Michael Madigan, a Chicago Democrat. Any proposals for raising taxes are likely to begin there.

The Illinois Senate, where Democrats have the votes to control the entire agenda, approved an income tax increase and sales tax expansion last year in an effort to balance the budget. But the proposal was never called for a vote in the Illinois House, which instead voted down a smaller income tax increase.

This session, don't look for the Senate to lead the way again. Many tax hike supporters in that chamber feel burned by events in the Illinois House and believe it is the state representatives' turn to take the reins on any tax initiatives.

"It has to pass both chambers. We've already done it," says Senate President John Cullerton, a Chicago Democrat. He also wants the House to act on a \$1-per-pack cigarette tax the Senate approved last year to boost health care spending, calling it a "top priority" for this session.

But there's by no means any consensus on raising taxes or a sense that such action is inevitable this session.

"I think the [income] tax increase lost in the form it was in in the House," Madigan spokesman Steve Brown said when asked if there's growing agreement among lawmakers on higher taxes.

Still, Brown agrees all top issues hinge on budget talks and the "national fiscal crisis that is affecting Illinois and every state in the union."

Notice the reference to "national" economic problems?

It's a recent refrain being repeated in many Illinois political circles. Democrats, facing a wave of economic criticism by the political minority Republicans, increasingly point out that Illinois is not alone in its financial troubles, and there's growing interest in statehouses across the nation for some kind of new stimulus targeting their budgets.

"For all of you who want to make it out to be an Illinois-only problem or Democrat-only problem, you need to peek out of your tunnel and look around the country," says Brown.

"Another option is to recognize that this is a national problem. Will states get the same attention that big banks and insurance companies got?"

However, the \$787 billion stimulus program approved earlier this year gave billions to the states, not only for construction projects but to plug education and health care budget holes as state resources dwindled.

Meanwhile, in Washington, D.C., there are mounting fears of the growing deficit. Having bailed out the banking and auto industries, it might be time to stop ballooning the red ink.

"They've got a lot of pressure in Congress not to give money to the states," says Martire, head of the Center for Tax and Budget Accountability.

That thinking, however, could be on a collision course with the coming outcry from states as they are about to be cut off by the federal assistance offered in last

year's stimulus plan. The state "bailout" aspect largely ends in the current budget year and will leave behind huge financial challenges in Illinois.

In each of the past two budgets, the state received more than \$1 billion in federal stimulus dollars that went for general state aid to school districts, money that retained local teaching jobs and averted massive cuts to programs and staff. Barring a new stimulus program, that money is essentially exhausted in the current budget, but finances have not improved for local districts or the state.

"We'd have to see an additional \$1 billion in state revenues just to break even," says Illinois State Board of Education spokesman Matt Vanover.

Turning to Washington, D.C., and President Barack Obama's administration isn't the only alternative being floated.

Some lawmakers say gambling expansion should be in the mix. Last year, the Illinois Senate approved a plan that would put casinos in Chicago, Rockford, Lake County and Danville. The plan has not advanced in the House, though it remains pending. In recent years, there's been an almost annual run at gambling expansion, regardless of the budget situation. Supporters have said such an expansion could eventually bring in more than \$1 billion a year when the casinos are up and running.

"I have not changed my mind that we could easily handle a few more riverboats," says state Rep. Lou Lang, a Skokie Democrat. "I think we can find the votes to pass a gambling bill. If there's the desire."

But even Lang says gambling expansion isn't the solution. If approved, he says, it would be at least a couple of years before the state would start getting enough money to begin to put a dent in its budget problems. Casinos just don't sprout up overnight, and Illinois needs money — lots of it — now.

Meanwhile, the political minority Republicans hope to use the economic pressures the ruling Democrats face to bring out long-sought spending reforms and an overhaul of the legislative map-making process.

So far, they're largely unwilling to talk about new revenues — Capitol-speak for tax increases.

"When things are going well, no one wants to change anything," says Patty

Schuh, spokeswoman for Senate Republican leader Christine Radogno of Lemont. "So while things are extremely difficult now, we shouldn't waste the opportunity to make changes in state government that should have been made a long time ago."

Topping Republicans' list of priorities are pension and Medicaid reforms, along with more employer friendly legislation aimed to lure more jobs to Illinois.

"These kinds of things have been paid lip service to, and nothing has been done," Schuh said.

Despite the complete Democratic control of state government, the Republicans do play a crucial role. Unlike the Democratic-run Senate, the Democratic majority in the House so far has been unable to assemble the votes for a tax increase.

Political observers say Democrats fear repercussions at the voting booth and want any tax increase to have some sort of bipartisan support for political cover.

In that sense, this session could boil down to a waiting game. Republicans may try to force action on as many issues as possible before they say they'll consider putting votes on any budget-fixing tax increase. Democrats may hold out on the belief that there are Republicans who will vote for a tax increase to preserve local health care agencies and social programs that are increasingly jeopardized by the state's economic malaise.

"One of two things will happen," Martire predicts. "They are either going to be 'same as it ever was' and pass a six-month budget and deal with it in the veto session. Or [House Republican leader Tom] Cross will cut a deal so they can do a structured roll call, so people can get out of there and focus on their campaigns. That's really what I see."

But if political observers see Cross and the Republicans playing a key role, the House Republican leader says it is the Democrats who should be the focus, since they are in control and have routinely excluded his GOP members from negotiations.

"I don't know what the strategy is. It takes 60 votes to pass any bill, and the speaker has 70," Cross says. "When he wants to pass something, he's found the votes. When he doesn't, he finds a multitude of excuses."

"That's the bottom-line question: What does the speaker want?"





Photograph by Jeremy Wilburn

Meanwhile, the old problems of the budget could face at least one new wrinkle this session in the form of the expected sale of the nearly vacant, maximum-security Thomson prison to the federal government for use as a federal penitentiary. The prison could house nearly 100 detainees upon the closure of Guantanamo Bay.

The state finished construction of the nearly \$120 million state-of-the-art prison in 2001, but a sinking state and national economy — ironically caused by the September 11 terrorist attacks — meant Illinois never had enough money to staff the prison. President Barack Obama's administration in December agreed to buy the prison, with part of it to be used to house suspected terrorists.

That triggered a political firestorm, as several Republicans running for statewide office accused Quinn of threatening Illinoisans' security by bringing terrorists to their backyards. Lawmakers are still awaiting a possible purchase price, and only recently did Quinn's administration file the paperwork that triggered a legislative committee's review of the plan that would close the prison as a state facility.

While that review is merely advisory, it sets in motion a legal timeline that could make the prison transaction one of the first things lawmakers deal with this year.

Similarly, one Republican running for governor, state Sen. Bill Brady of Bloomington, has suggested selling off the state's tollway system if a private manager can better run the 274-mile highway system in northern Illinois. While he's not touting it as a budget salve, the attraction to others could well be a potential multibillion-dollar check from such a buyer. Chicago received \$1.8 billion for the 7.8-mile Skyway, and Indiana got nearly \$4 billion upfront when it leased out its 157-mile tollway system.

Illinois first looked at such a deal in 2006, but it never developed. And while the sheer size of the possible payout is certain to invite attention, Indiana's governor cast doubts on Illinois' prospects, telling the *Times of Northwest Indiana* that the current state of the financial markets would likely result in fewer dollars.

"We might still have gotten the deal done, but it wouldn't have been for \$3.9 billion or close to it," Republican Gov.

Mitch Daniels recently said at a business gathering, after learning of renewed Illinois interest in a tollway sale or lease.

And there will be other, nonbudgetary issues that could arise.

The death penalty has again drawn scrutiny because of continuing perceived disparities in how it is administered. The situation was highlighted in a pair of high-profile Chicago-suburban homicides.

James Degorski was sent to life in prison for his role in killing seven people at a Brown's Chicken and Pasta in Palatine. The other killer in that case had already been sentenced to life behind bars. Just weeks later, another jury would order lethal injection for Brian Dugan for the rape and murder of a 10-year-old Naperville girl. Both cases had haunted legal circles for years, with two other men serving more than a decade on death row for Dugan's crimes before being exonerated.

The state hasn't seriously examined the death penalty since 2003 in the wake of more than a dozen exonerations that ultimately prompted then-Gov. George Ryan to commute every death sentence to life in



prison just before he left office. Republican governor hopeful Jim Ryan — who once helped prosecute the men wrongly convicted in the Dugan case — has called for further reducing the number of crimes that can bring about a death sentence.

But that recommendation was similarly contained in a 2003 report on reforming the death penalty and was not embraced by lawmakers. In an election year when incumbents are wary of votes that could make them appear soft on crime, taking the death penalty off the table isn't likely to have much traction.

Reforming red-light cameras is also expected to top a local agenda for many suburban Chicago lawmakers. The move could bring about a typical Chicago-versus-the-suburbs bout in the General Assembly. Mayor Richard Daley is very supportive of the cameras that bring in tens of millions of dollars for his budget. Yet recent investigations into the use of cameras to issue red-light tickets have drummed up public discontent. Angst over the widespread use of such cameras was recently credited with sinking attempts to broaden such enforcement to speeding violations and to institute it in other regions of the state.

A growing number of lawmakers want the state to revisit the laws that allow such camera enforcement, and Senate President Cullerton also favors a review.

But in the end, this legislative session is expected to be almost singular in focus.

"Clearly the one issue that dominates all other issues is the budget. That is going to drive them," says Martire. "It's not going to be about the death penalty or anything else."

And, still, the budget issue is shrouded in uncertainty.

At the moment, it's not even clear exactly when Quinn will unveil his plan that's sure to renew his call for a tax increase. The budget speech is scheduled for February, but Quinn sought to push the date back into March. However, Republicans blocked that during the fall legislative session in October. If Democrats want, they could move the speech back without needing Republican votes, now that the new year has arrived.

Further complicating matters is the early interruption of the 2010 primary elections. While relatively few incumbent lawmakers have primary challenges, the February

2 contest could signal voter satisfaction, or lack thereof, in Quinn.

Both he and Democratic challenger Dan Hynes, the state's comptroller, are pushing for tax increases in their budget solutions. If voters back Quinn, it could be viewed as a legislative mandate. On the other hand, Republican candidates are united in their anti-tax message, and numerous Democrats fear 2010 is shaping up to be a bad year for the party.

"Gov. Quinn's going to be reluctant to press for a tax increase if he wins the primary. The Republican rhetoric has been strongly anti-tax, even though the majority of Republican gubernatorial candidates know that at some point, we're going to have to raise taxes," says Lawrence. "It's going to be very difficult for Gov. Quinn to press for tax increases when he's facing that kind of rhetoric."

There's similar mixed sentiment on what a primary loss would mean for Quinn.

"You could argue both sides of that. If he loses, he could just say: 'Here I go. I'm going to address the problems we have without having to worry about the next

election,'" says Democratic state Rep. Elaine Nekritz of Northbrook. "Or, it might scare everybody so bad that it would be impossible to put the votes on it."

A primary loss would also quickly relegate Quinn to lame-duck status, and lawmakers have historically been quick to minimize the role of any governor who won't be returning.

It has many predicting that a budget solution may remain elusive in the coming months, that lawmakers will leave in May having fixed little and that this entire scenario will repeat itself headed into 2011, though likely under worsening economic conditions.

"I hope I'm wrong about this. I would hope the governor and the legislature will squarely address the fiscal situation," says Lawrence, looking ahead to the end of the spring session.

"But what I fear I will be telling you is, the governor and legislature failed to address a humongous deficit and have further jeopardized the health of the state and generations to come." □

*John Patterson covers the Capitol for the (Arlington Heights) Daily Herald.*

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# The governor's race

Nearly a dozen Democratic, Republican and Green Party candidates have lined up in a contest for state government's highest office

by Dave McKinney

After Barack Obama became president, ex-Gov. Rod Blagojevich allegedly considered appointing himself to Obama's vacated Senate seat, partly out of frustration at being "stuck" as Illinois' chief executive.

Arguably, Blagojevich might have been onto something when his ill-fated political brainstorming was memorialized on a federal wiretap. There truly is a certain amount of logic in not wanting to be governor of Illinois right now.

State government's \$12 billion pit of red ink continues to deepen, heightening the chance the next governor will wear the collar for a tax hike. One out of every 10 working-age adults here is out of a job. Foreclosures are soaring. And nearly three out of four Illinoisans believe the state is headed in the wrong direction.

Undoubtedly, that daunting list of troubles will play a role in deciding the February 2 primary elections, where nearly a dozen Republican, Democratic and Green Party candidates have lined up for state government's highest office. But Blagojevich and the huge stink he left behind in Springfield is the true wild card in this historic campaign season.

Not since 1928, before the Great Depression, have Illinois voters been confronted with elections for governor and U.S. senator simultaneously without a duly elected incumbent from which to choose for either office.

Blagojevich is a persistent theme in the Democratic gubernatorial primary. Demo-

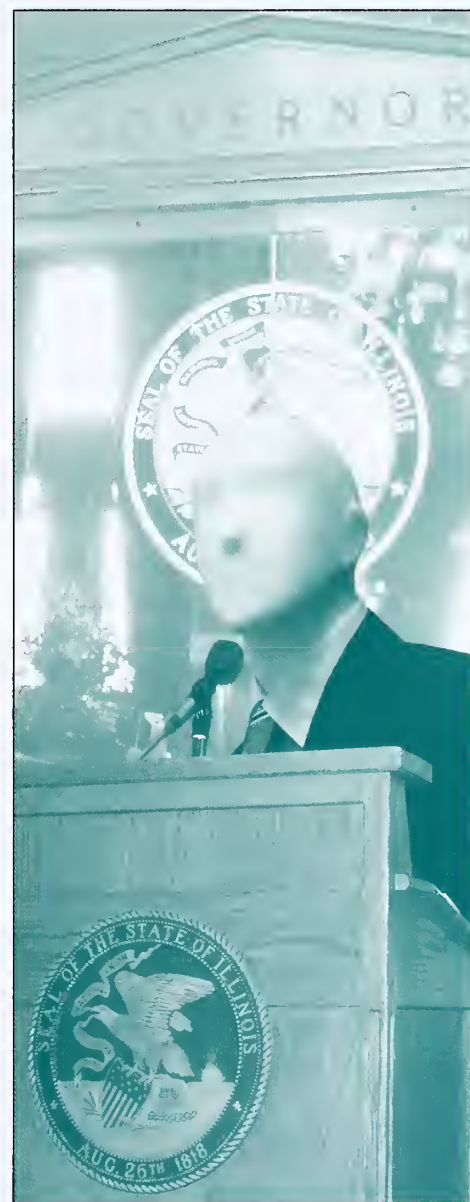
cratic Gov. Pat Quinn, who took over for Blagojevich after his January ouster, has faced a barrage of attacks from Democratic rival Dan Hynes, the three-term comptroller who has called Quinn Blagojevich's "chief cheerleader."

For his part, Quinn contends that voters desperately want to forget the Blagojevich saga and instead want someone to turn around the state's economy and make state government solvent again.

"Frankly, voters see Rod Blagojevich in a rear-view mirror. Politicians may still want to bring up Rod Blagojevich, but the voters don't," Quinn told *Illinois Issues* in an interview. "They see me as having accomplished a stable transition from the chaotic, disgraceful situation back in December and January to the situation where we have great challenges on the budget and economy. They have a governor they have confidence in, who's an honest person and runs an honest government."

On the Republican side, Blagojevich's collapse has created a vacuum that has seven candidates vying for the party's nomination for governor. The last time a Republican gubernatorial primary had more entrants was 1936, when eight candidates were on the ballot.

The lineup appears formidable. Sen. Bill Brady and Sen. Kirk Dillard are in the mix, as are former state GOP chief Andy McKenna, DuPage County Board Chairman Bob Schillerstrom, political consultant Dan Proft, businessman Adam



Andrzejewski and former Attorney General Jim Ryan, who lost the 2002 gubernatorial election to Blagojevich.

"The corruption issues and general incompetence of the Blagojevich administration give us as Republicans a great opportunity to come in and say there's a different way of doing this," Schillerstrom says.

The respected *Cook Political Report*, a nonpartisan political newsletter based in Washington, D.C., that monitors cam-

paigns across the country, has characterized the Illinois governor's race in 2010 only leaning Democratic, not solidly in Democratic control — a sobering assessment given how blue a state Illinois was in 2008 during Obama's historic presidential ascent.

"It's Blagojevich baggage," says Jennifer Thomas, an analyst with the newsletter who monitors races for governor and U.S. Senate. "If that had not happened, we would not be having this conversation. I

really think that Republicans at least sense that there is a wish among voters to do things very, very differently."

Fairly or not, no one has had to atone more for Blagojevich's sins than Quinn, the impeached ex-governor's two-time running mate. As recently as 2006, when both Blagojevich and Quinn last appeared on the ballot together, Quinn described Blagojevich as someone who has "always been a person who's honest and one of integrity."

## The U.S. Senate race

If anyone needs a reminder how important Illinois' open U.S. Senate seat is, simply go back a year and replay that deliciously infamous line from Rod Blagojevich: "I've got this thing, and it's f---ing golden."

Most everyone now knows Blagojevich was referring to the Senate seat once occupied by President Obama, a post now sought by a dozen Democratic, Republican and Green Party candidates in one of the most closely watched U.S. Senate campaigns in Illinois history.

Truth be told, the sprawling field of candidates in the February 2 primary aiming to replace Democratic Sen. Roland Burris, Blagojevich's scandal-tarred appointee, probably attaches the same value to the seat as Blagojevich once did.

Especially the six Republican candidates.

For any Republican to win this seat would deal an enormously embarrassing blow to Obama and other Chicagoans in the White House and could threaten the president's midterm congressional agenda. Love or hate Burris, his vote has been important to Obama's efforts to find consensus on a health-care plan and to pass the \$787 billion economic stimulus program.

"Republicans will put a lot of money into this. To pick up Obama's Senate seat would be a wonderfully juicy thing for them to do," said David Yepsen, director of Southern Illinois University's Paul Simon Public Policy Institute.

Illinois has been as blue a state as there is. But Blagojevich and Burris' mishandling of Obama's old seat, coupled with Attorney General Lisa Madigan's decision to stay out of the race despite being courted by Obama, have left this race a toss-up. That recognition has given the state's moribund Republican Party its first true measure of hope in a marquee race against Democrats since the 1990s.

Republican U.S. Rep. Mark Kirk, a centrist five-term congressman from Chicago's North Shore, is considered a favorite in the Republican field.

The Democratic side appears to be essentially a three-way race, with state Treasurer Alexi Giannoulias considered a front-runner.

An early December survey by the Rasmussen Reports polling firm had Giannoulias leading Kirk, 42 percent to 39 percent, in a general election matchup.

"The Democratic field is not certainly what national Democrats had hoped it would be. In other words, Lisa Madigan isn't in it. It's sort of a quirky primary, but let's see who comes out of it. I suspect Giannoulias has done the work he needs to do," says Jennifer Duffy, an analyst of U.S. Senate and governors' races with the nonpartisan *Cook Political Report*.

"On the Republican side, if Kirk is the nominee, this race is a toss-up. Kirk knows how to win tough races. He knows how to raise money. He's from the right part of the state and knows how to take away votes from Democrats," Duffy says.

In an interview with *Illinois Issues*, Kirk says part of his strong standing in the polls has to do with how turned off voters have been with Burris' tumultuous appointment. Polls have shown Burris with the lowest approval rating of any Illinois official because of how he gained the seat over the objections of Obama and other party leaders. He misled and the House impeachment panel about his lobbying for the appointment and was subsequently admonished by a Senate ethics panel.

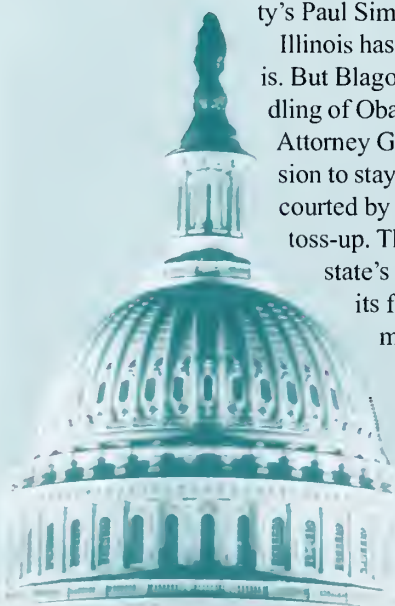
"We prefer to call this the 'Roland Burris' seat," Kirk says. "It reminds folks of how we got here."

An abortion-rights advocate who has scored low marks with the National Rifle Association, Kirk says his moderate views position him well for a general election, which he says he believes will be a matchup between himself and Giannoulias.

"I am a fiscal conservative, social moderate, national security hawk. And I think that's also where most of the people of Illinois are," he says. "Obviously, when we're in a primary, we have party divisions. But at the moment, things look pretty commanding, and our job is to take nothing for granted, roll to the primary election and then look to what will be the most vigorous race for Senate in the United States in the general election."

Kirk was one of seven House Republicans to vote last June for Obama's cap-and-trade legislation, which limits greenhouse emissions and has drawn GOP scorn as a "national energy tax." Now, Kirk says he is against the plan, which narrowly passed the House 219-212.

"I voted for it because it was in the narrow interest of my congressional district. But when you study the wider Illinois econo-





"I stood up on many, many occasions to speak out and criticize the abusive budget practices and the mismanagement of state government that we were experiencing under Rod Blagojevich. Pat Quinn stood silent," says Hynes, whose first serious tangle with Blagojevich came in 2005 with a refusal to pay for undeliverable flu vaccines Blagojevich ordered.

"He was basically a partner of Rod Blagojevich's throughout the first term," Hynes told *Illinois Issues*, referring to

Quinn. "Once they were safely re-elected, then yes, he started speaking out on things. But it showed, when it was really more difficult to do so, one of us showed leadership, and the other did not."

But Quinn insists he broke with Blagojevich early and often. A Blagojevich emissary threatened him with "political divorce" in 2004 for offering a more aggressive plan to clean up the scandal-ridden Illinois State Toll Highway Authority than what Blagojevich then

had on the table, Quinn says.

In 2007, Quinn opposed Blagojevich's failed gross receipts tax. A year later, to underscore his disgust with Blagojevich, Quinn launched an initiative to change the Illinois Constitution to allow voters to recall corrupt or inept governors. With Blagojevich working against the plan behind the scenes, the idea stalled in the state Senate but passed in 2009 and will go before voters for final approval in November.

my, the legislation is inappropriate," says Kirk, who has said he would vote against it as a U.S. senator.

Duffy, with the *Cook Political Report*, regards conservative real estate developer Patrick Hughes as Kirk's most viable opponent in the GOP primary. Other Republicans in the race include Donald Lowery, Andy Martin, Kathleen Thomas and John Arrington.

"There's a giant disparity between Congressman Kirk and I," says Hughes, who has the backing of conservative icon Phyllis Schlafly and former Chicago Bears coach Mike Ditka, among others. "His policies, both fiscal and social, are to the left of even a moderate Republican.

"The base will be behind me," predicts Hughes, who credits Kirk's cap-and-trade vote as his reason for entering the race. "They're apoplectic on cap and trade and realize he's off the reservation on our platform in significant ways."

On the Democratic side, Giannoulias faces Chicago Urban League chief and former Blagojevich spokeswoman Cheryle Robinson Jackson and former Chicago Inspector General David Hoffman. Other Democrats on the ballot include lawyer Jacob Meister and Robert Marshall.

Elected treasurer in 2006 with Obama's support, Giannoulias clashed with Blagojevich by being among the first Democrats to oppose the ex-governor's gross receipts tax. Last year, Giannoulias made headlines with his threat to pull the state's \$8 billion investment portfolio from Wells Fargo bank if it shut down the Hartmarx clothing plant in Des Plaines. Wells Fargo, the suit maker's main creditor, later agreed to sell the plant, preserving 600 jobs.

"We saved a company from being liquidated. I'm the only candidate who's done that. That's something voters will pay attention to," says Giannoulias, who has lined up significant labor support and backing from key Democratic Party leaders such as Illinois Senate President John Cullerton.

"It's one of the most important, most high-profile races in the country. It's the president's Senate seat," Giannoulias told *Illinois Issues*. "As Democrats, we have to make sure we have the best candidate who can keep this seat so we can focus on health-care reform, so we can focus on rescuing a planet in peril, so we can unfreeze the credit markets."

As for vulnerabilities, Giannoulias' family bank, Broadway Bank, is financially troubled and once did business with convicted Blagojevich fundraiser Tony Rezko, as did some other Chicago banks prior to Rezko's indictment. Giannoulias own a 3.6 percent

stake in the bank but emphasizes those are nonvoting shares.

Hoffman, who spoke out against Chicago Mayor Richard M. Daley's controversial deal to lease public parking meters when he was the city's inspector general, says Rezko's ties to the Giannoulias family bank raise questions about the treasurer's abilities in a general election.

"Both as a substantive matter and political matter, being able to say I have no connections whatsoever to Blagojevich, Rezko or any other problem players is a major distinguishing feature between the other candidates and me because it speaks to my independence from the political establishment, and it speaks to my electability in the general election," says Hoffman, a member of Gov. Pat Quinn's Illinois Reform Commission.

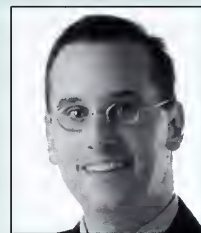
Jackson, the Chicago Urban League chief, is positioned to draw support both from female and African-American primary voters and says she is more attuned to the economic plight now facing most Illinoisans.

"What sets me apart is that I'm strongest on the issues that people are most troubled by and are struggling with today, those bread and butter issues like jobs, struggling to hold on to my home, struggling to keep the doors open to my small business, frustrated with schools that don't educate," she says.

Among all those in the Senate race, Jackson is most directly tied to Blagojevich but downplays the association, noting that as Chicago Urban League chief she spoke out against Blagojevich's failed gross-receipts tax and is behind an ongoing civil rights lawsuit filed originally against Blagojevich's administration for inadequately funding public schools.

"The campaigns are saying it's an issue, but for people it's not an issue," Jackson says.

Dave McKinney



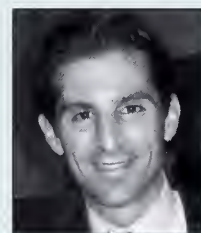
Patrick Hughes



U.S. Rep. Mark Kirk



State Treasurer  
Alexi Giannoulias



David Hoffman



Cheryle Robinson  
Jackson



Besides recall, Quinn says he has taken steps to improve the state's ethics climate by approving caps on campaign contributions, rewriting the Illinois Freedom of Information Act and dumping most of the Blagojevich-appointed University of Illinois board of trustees after an admissions scandal.

The governor faced criticism from Hynes, Republicans and others for not embracing all of the ethics recommendations of his Illinois Reform Commission, led by former federal prosecutor Patrick Collins. The governor and his task force clashed over caps on the political funds controlled by legislative leaders, a reform that ultimately wound up on the cutting-room floor.

"Most of their ideas, not all of them, were enacted into law," Quinn says.

The governor also has been hit for failing to deliver on his immediate pledge upon taking office to "fumigate" state government after Blagojevich's departure. While the new governor did cut some senior Blagojevich aides, the *Chicago Sun-Times* reported in November that at least 70 Blagojevich hires whose personnel records had been subpoenaed by federal prosecutors remain in the Quinn administration.

"Ninety-nine percent of the people running state government right now are the same people who were running it under Rod Blagojevich," Hynes says. "Sixteen hundred people hired by Blagojevich making over \$70,000, Pat Quinn refuses to scrutinize those positions and eliminate half of them and save \$100 million, which is what I think we need to do."

Quinn, however, says he doesn't intend to fire those Blagojevich holdovers after getting a request from U.S. Attorney Patrick Fitzgerald's office "not to do anything that might interfere with the investigation" into hiring-related abuses under Blagojevich.

On other fronts, the governor continues to push for an income tax increase. He proposed raising the income tax rate from 3 to 4.5 percent and sought to raise the personal exemption, so taxpayers earning \$60,900 annually would end up paying more while those under that threshold would pay less. A similar plan died in the House. Another version with a higher tax increase, which Quinn also supported, passed the Senate and is awaiting a House vote.



Gov. Pat Quinn



Comptroller Dan Hynes



Adam Andrzejewski



State Sen. Bill Brady

By contrast, Hynes has called for an income tax increase for those earning more than \$200,000 annually and has hit Quinn in campaign commercials, alleging his tax plan would affect the middle class.

Quinn champions the passage of two capital construction bills that eventually will result in \$33 billion in spending on schools, roads and other bricks-and-mortar projects. The last major capital program occurred under former Gov. George Ryan. While Quinn notes the "Herculean effort" involved in getting that passed, Hynes has condemned the governor for not signing the borrowing plans quickly enough and getting construction money out the door to be used during last summer's construction season.

"We're losing jobs, and his one claim to fame, the capital bill, was delayed because of his own inconsistency and indecisiveness in signing the bill and getting it implemented in time for the construction season," Hynes says.

Despite any naysaying from critics, Quinn believes he has had a productive 12 months.

"Since I've been governor, we've accomplished a great deal in a relatively short period of time, especially with integrity," Quinn says.

Hynes wants to "demonize me, and it ain't working. I can tell you that," Quinn says. "He's spent \$2 million on carpet-bombing me with negative commercials. It ain't working. My view is he who slings mud loses ground, so he's not getting anywhere with this. It's unhelpful to the people of Illinois. But if that's the way he wants to run his campaign, so be it."

Quinn held an early lead over Hynes in a mid-October poll taken by Southern Illinois University's Paul Simon Public Policy Institute. The survey of 800 people found nearly 34 percent of those who planned to vote in the Democratic primary supported Quinn, compared with just under 17 percent for Hynes.

Green Party candidate Rich Whitney of Carbondale, who received 10.5 percent of

the vote in 2006, is uncontested.

On the Republican side, the primary race is less defined, largely because of the last-minute entry of two-term Attorney General Jim Ryan, Blagojevich's vanquished 2002 Republican opponent.

Unlike in the past two gubernatorial elections, Republicans are energized this time around. They have the Blagojevich scandal and his summer trial with which to work. And the party sees how Obama's sliding popularity has boosted the fortunes of other Republican candidates for governor, like in Virginia and New Jersey where Democratic incumbents were defeated.

It's difficult to say who is ahead of the pack among Republicans in Illinois. A late-October poll by Rasmussen Reports identified Ryan as the leader in name recognition among declared GOP gubernatorial candidates, with 16 percent of voters surveyed holding a favorable opinion of him.

Ryan faces two serious blemishes that threaten his candidacy. In November, after a DuPage County jury sentenced Brian Dugan to death for the 1983 murder of 10-year-old Jeanine Nicarico, Ryan issued an apology for refusing to prosecute him while he had been DuPage's state's attorney. Instead, Ryan sent two innocent men — Rolando Cruz and Alejandro Hernandez — to death row for the Naperville girl's murder. As recently as 2002, Ryan demonstrated no regret for those actions.

Ryan also has faced scrutiny for his relationship with college buddy Stuart Levine, Ryan's former finance director who helped raise \$500,000 for the former attorney general's 2002 gubernatorial campaign.

Levine pleaded guilty to federal fraud and money-laundering charges for scheming to shake down companies that wanted business from the Teachers' Retirement System or the Illinois Health Facilities Planning Board, state boards on which Levine served.

As part of his plea agreement, Levine admitted to a 2004 scheme to squeeze an investment firm for a \$1.5 million contribution to Blagojevich in exchange for





State Sen. Kirk Dillard



Andy McKenna



Dan Proft



Jim Ryan



Bob Schillerstrom

\$220 million in business from the pension system.

Ryan, the only major gubernatorial candidate to refuse an interview request from *Illinois Issues*, has said he had no knowledge of Levine's lawlessness but has appeared agitated when asked about the relationship by reporters.

"Jim knows regardless of what he said, no one will believe it. The perception of Stu Levine and Jim Ryan is something that he can't overcome, and it really gets to him," says Brady, the Bloomington Republican running for governor. "You know what the Democrats will do to him on that."

Before Ryan's entry, Brady — the only downstater in the seven-way GOP primary field — stood atop the SIU poll, with backing from 10 percent of those sur-

veyed. With an estimated 50 percent of the Republican vote downstate, Brady could benefit from having four of the seven gubernatorial candidates from DuPage County, carving up that GOP-heavy enclave of suburban Chicago while he lays claim to downstate.

But Brady's colleague in the state Senate, Kirk Dillard, does not buy into that thinking. A state senator since 1993, Dillard goes into the primary with backing from the GOP's beloved former governor, Jim Edgar, who once employed Dillard as his chief of staff.

"I'm a statewide and not just a DuPage County candidate. The endorsement of former Gov. Edgar helps me in every corner of the Land of Lincoln," says Dillard, who ruffled feathers in his party for appearing in an Obama campaign

The Green Party candidate for lieutenant governor is Don Crawford of St. Elmo.

Seven candidates have filed for comptroller, which is being vacated by Democratic gubernatorial hopeful Dan Hynes. Among them is former three-term Republican Treasurer Judy Baar Topinka of Riverside, who lost to Rod Blagojevich in the 2006 governor's race. Other Republicans include Jim Dodge of Orland Park and William Kelly of Chicago. On the Democratic side, Rep. David Miller of Dolton is among three Democrats to file for comptroller. The others are Raja Krishamoorthi of Hoffman Estates and Clinton Krislov of Wilmette.

The Green Party candidate for comptroller is R. Erika Schafer of Chicago.

For treasurer, four candidates have emerged. The lone Republican is Sen. Dan Rutherford of Pontiac. Democratic candidates for the post include former Rep. Robin Kelly of Matteson, who has served as chief of staff for current Treasurer Alexi Giannoulas; and Justin Oberman of Chicago.

The Green Party entry is Scott Summers of Harvard.

commercial during the presidential primary season.

Others, such as Proft, are trying to get a populist message out to GOP voters that builds on the Democ-

cratic fatigue that could be being felt after nearly eight years of total Democratic dominance in Springfield.

"The fix is in for the nine Chicago Democrats who run this state and their political functionaries, and the fix is against the people who play by the rules of this state, who finance state government and who receive very little back in services or benefits," Proft says.

Casting a similar theme, Andrzejewski says his lack of background in government is a strong point among conservative Republican voters fed up with Blagojevich and insider dealing at the Capitol.

"Nine months ago, my biggest weakness was I didn't have Illinois political experience. But now, it's the great advantage because Illinois political experience simply means political baggage. My opponents are weighted down by it, and I'm free of it," the Hinsdale activist says.

But in this race, Blagojevich's long shadow can't be avoided. McKenna, the former state GOP chief, has drawn national attention for his short campaign film mocking the ex-governor's perfect coiffure. A Blagojevich-esque toupee was digitally affixed atop the Capitol dome, and the piece featured truck drivers, pedestrians — even babies — all wearing Blago's mop top.

"His hair, in many ways, is a symbol of the culture in Springfield," McKenna says. "The leadership there too often has been self-serving and put its own personal interests before the interests of the people. Those elements all were very much a part of the Blagojevich administration."

A commercial about Blagojevich's hair, as frivolous as it may be to some worried about state government shutting down, touches on something that could be a key to the governorship in 2010, McKenna says.

"He's a symbol of something that makes people very angry." □

*Dave McKinney is the Springfield bureau chief of the Chicago Sun-Times*

## Also on the ballot

The contested down-ballot races in the February 2 primary pit state lawmaker against state lawmaker and include the GOP's 2006 candidate for governor, who wants to resurrect her political career in a new job.

Thirteen Democratic, Republican and Green Party candidates have filed to run for lieutenant governor, an obscure political outpost from which Pat Quinn ascended to become governor when former Gov. Rod Blagojevich was ousted.

The six-way Democratic field for lieutenant governor includes Sen. Rickey Hendon of Chicago, Sen. Terry Link of Vernon Hills, Rep. Arthur Turner of Chicago and Rep. Michael Boland of East Moline. Other Democrats who have filed for a spot on the ballot include Scott Lee Cohen of Chicago and Thomas Michael Castillo of Elmhurst.

The six-way Republican field for lieutenant governor includes Sen. Matt Murphy of Palatine and Carbondale Mayor Brad Cole. Others include Don Tracy of Springfield, Jason Plummer of Edwardsville, Randy White Sr. of Hamilton and Dennis Cook of Orland Park.

# David Ellis: A rise in action

The lawyer behind Rod Blagojevich's impeachment and removal from office gained undeniable fodder for his next mystery novel, but readers should expect the unexpected

by Bethany Jaeger

*Editor's note: This article originally appeared in our online-only December arts issue.*

David Ellis is like a character in a good book. The more you find out about him, the more you realize how much you don't know. Your first impression only skims the surface. You're intrigued to know more, so you keep reading.

His day job is to serve as chief legal counsel for House Speaker Michael Madigan. In his "spare time," or, rather, in the time that he hasn't fallen asleep in front of the computer, Ellis writes mystery novels.

The dark subjects about which he writes — political corruption, adultery, pedophilia, murder — contrast with his even-tempered and down-to-earth demeanor depicted by his friends. He even relates his own upbringing in the Chicago suburb of Downers Grove as a "nice apple-pie, nuclear family: one sister, great parents who were just wonderful to me."

"For a closet homicidal maniac, he's a pretty good guy," jokes Michael Kasper, a longtime friend and Chicago attorney. "He's every bit as nice a guy as he seems."

Kasper would know. He once stood in Ellis' shoes, previously working as Madigan's general counsel. They both graduated from Northwestern University's law school, although at separate times. They worked together during Ellis' years in private practice and on the speaker's staff,

analyzing complicated redistricting laws and writing endless legal briefs defending the 2001 legislative map.

"That's when I first realized that his ability to write wasn't like everybody else's," Kasper says. "I would struggle with mine, and they would take a long time. When it was his turn, he would turn out these beautiful briefs overnight. And it just drove me nuts."

They stood in each other's weddings. Most recently, they stood together as they tried and convicted then-Gov. Rod Blagojevich during the Illinois Senate impeachment hearings.

The attorneys had no precedent and no traditional witnesses. The emotionally and physically draining experience changed Ellis as a writer, he says. For starters, Blagojevich's rise and fall, as well as his international media blitz, made Ellis' latest book seem boring.

The author couldn't ask for better fodder for creating an antagonist. In fact, Ellis' next book, his sixth, is expected to draw from his Blagojevich experience. It's scheduled to be published about the same time the ex-governor's federal corruption trial starts in June 2010.

Ellis says the book won't give readers what they expect.

On one hand, he says, the plot does include an FBI investigation into an allegedly corrupt governor. But although the novel might offer familiar schemes and secret wiretaps, the storyline is not Blagojevich's, he says.

That would be too boring to Ellis and too predictable for readers. "That may be what everybody wants me to do, but that's not what they're going to be getting. ... I can't write something that doesn't fascinate me."

Yet the entire Blagojevich experience has inspired the creative side of his brain. His role, from turning a 76-page criminal complaint into his star witness to conceptualizing a catchy theme in his rebuttal to the governor's last speech, opened new ways to give his characters more depth, to draw readers in and to force them to explore whether things really are as they seem.

House and Senate members describe Ellis as the right man to prosecute Blagojevich because he is, in their words, an even-keeled, whip-smart, down-to-earth, fair, analytical, approachable and methodical lawyer.

Madigan adds that Ellis joined his legal team during what is known as the rising action in Blagojevich's narrative. He became the speaker's chief legal counsel in February 2007, when tension between Madigan and Blagojevich escalated and led to the governor suing the speaker, as well as the House clerk. At the heart of those lawsuits, which Ellis handled in court, was the discrepancy over the governor's executive powers and his attempts to skirt legislative approval. Those themes landed a major role in the articles of Blagojevich's impeachment that Ellis drafted and presented to the Senate.



Illinois Senate President John Cullerton says rules for the impeachment trial were written to avoid the possibility of politicians carrying out grudges against the governor, which would have tainted the integrity of the precedent-setting process. "If [Ellis] didn't do a good job in making the case, there would always be the question of whether or not we ramrodded somebody and gave him a kangaroo court. And to me, Ellis, like most good prosecutors, did an excellent job."

It wasn't easy. He did it with no precedent for the impeachment process and with no traditional witnesses. He was limited to the 76-page federal criminal complaint based on an affidavit by FBI Agent Daniel Cain. Cain testified but was under strict orders from U.S. Attorney Patrick Fitzgerald to only confirm the facts as presented in that document, nothing more. All other witnesses involved in Blagojevich's ongoing federal criminal investigation were off limits.

Without testimony from those witnesses or from Blagojevich — who didn't appear until the final hours of the trial — Ellis brought the document to life by using the governor's own words, transcribed from secret federal recordings and super-sized onto large poster boards.

The U.S. Senate seat "is a f---ing valuable thing, you just don't give it away for nothing," was enlarged and displayed in front of the chamber.

"Every time a board flipped, 300 cameras went off. And 59 chins went up off of the affidavit and up to the board," Ellis recalled during a journalism conference in Indianapolis last summer. "You know that old saying, 'You had to be there?' You really had to be there."

The governor wasn't there until the very end. That disappointed Ellis. "I wanted a fight. I wanted them to challenge me every step of the way because I thought I could overcome that challenge."

Rather, Blagojevich defended himself through a national media blitz. When he did appear on the last day of the trial, he never testified under oath. He spoke for about 50 minutes, declaring his innocence and repeatedly questioning how he could be impeached for expanding health care and importing cheaper prescription drugs and flu vaccine. Blagojevich said that in all of his work, the end

was a moral imperative, justifying the means.

Ellis rebutted: When the camera is on, the governor's "for the little guy." When the camera is off, he's for "legal, personal and political" gain, a statement mirroring Blagojevich's own words as transcribed by the feds. "The governor knows what to say when he's on camera,



House and Senate members describe Ellis as the right man to prosecute Blagojevich because he is, in their words, an even-keeled, whip-smart, down-to-earth, fair, analytical, approachable and methodical lawyer.

but this case is about what happens when he's off camera," Ellis said.

Senators describe Ellis' rebuttal as unemotional and compelling, fair and persuasive.

"It was the most stark contrast between the governor as he presented himself and the governor as we'd heard him on the secretly recorded tapes," says Sen. Don Harmon, an Oak Park Democrat. "As a lawyer, I was envious of [Ellis'] abilities but so glad that he was the one making that argument. He did everything in a very even-keel, non-sensational but effective way."

It's that contrast of Blagojevich's character that most intrigued Ellis. It inspired him to ask questions when developing his next fictional protagonist and antagonist. How might a character become corrupt? Did he have enablers steering him in the wrong direction? Did

he get bad advice? Was he overwhelmed or desperate?

"I always thought the story of corruption would be a very interesting one because I think people are obviously complicated," Ellis says. "And most people are not all good or all bad. There are shades of gray everywhere."

Ambivalence almost serves as a character in his mysteries. "I like complicated situations, where you're a little ambivalent about whether the person is good or bad. I think that's interesting. That's how life is interesting."

Ellis' first novel, *Line of Vision*, for instance, is told through the eyes of the main character, Marty Kalish, who is charged with murdering his mistress' husband. Readers are taken on a twisting plotline driven by court scenes that cast doubt over the facts as Kalish tells them.

Photograph by Jeff Schulte, courtesy of Illinois House Democrats

Ellis says while working as a private attorney in Chicago, he carved out one hour here, two hours there, to write. It took him three years and four or five drafts, with the final version looking completely different from the first. He was, essentially, teaching himself to write. It worked. His creation won the prestigious 2002 Edgar Allan Poe Award for Best First Novel by an American Author.

In his latest book, *The Hidden Man*, the main character is Jason Kolarich, a mid-30s lawyer who rose to the top after winning a high-profile political corruption case. Kolarich (pronounced cola-rich) is the character Ellis had been looking for. Kolarich wrestles with his past mistakes, his future purpose, his fate and his faith.

"This is the guy I want to spend time with," Ellis said late one night after the House adjourned the last night of its fall veto session. "Probably in part because he's probably the most like me of anybody I've ever written."

Kolarich, however, is an exaggerated version of Ellis. The author says his character is smarter, funnier, better-looking, more athletic and more courageous. Like Ellis, he's also a south side Catholic, but Kolarich has gone through tremendous distress in losing his wife and child. His life turns upside down again when he's hired to defend his long-lost childhood friend who is charged with murdering a pedophile. When an anonymous benefactor tries to control the case and block Kolarich from discovering the truth, Kolarich embarks on a journey with no fear, nothing to lose.

"That's an interesting emotion to feel," Ellis says. "It's a recklessness that gives you some freedom."

Kolarich, whose ambivalence is similar to that of many of Ellis' other characters, will stick around for the author's upcoming sequel. He will, Ellis says, help the FBI investigate a governor.

The premise already has intrigued the House speaker, a political strategist and technician who says murder mysteries are not typically in his library. "When we embarked upon the impeachment inquiry here in the House, we knew that this would be an historic event," Madigan says. "That's why it got so much

time and attention from me, and that's why I'd be interested in wherever I might pick up from reading his book."

But the speaker may be surprised, as could many readers who know Ellis as the House prosecutor. That side of Ellis differs from Ellis the author, Ellis says. But they influence each other, and they compete for his time.

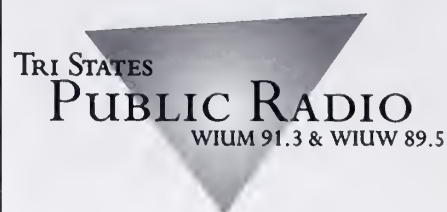
"I don't spend very much time being Dave the writer when I'm the lawyer in the House. I think that, sometimes, I miss that person," he says. "If you took writing away from me, I wouldn't know what to do with myself. The days that I can't write are days that I enjoy less. I won't say they're sad days, but they're frustrating days."

One of Ellis' frequent challengers on parliamentary procedure in the House is Republican Rep. Bill Black of Danville, whose charismatic tirades have rallied the GOP against the majority Democrats. While Black says it's fun to challenge parliamentarians, Ellis is an "agreeable person. And when an agreeable person disagrees with you, it's hard to get too upset."

Black goes as far as describing Ellis as a "kind of renaissance man of the General Assembly" because of his discipline, writing about an hour a night when he gets home from what's often a 12- to 15-hour-a-day job for Madigan. "He's a nice guy," Black says. "And there's an old saying in the chamber: The world's full of nice gals and nice guys, but find someone who can do the damn job. He does his job, and he evidently is doing both — very well."

The last week of the legislature's veto session, for instance, was brutal. Ellis was integral in around-the-clock negotiations on three major bills, ranging from overhauling regulations for cemeteries to enacting first-of-a-kind limits on political campaign contributions. In the midst of negotiations, Ellis found time to put his first daughter to bed and write about an hour before partaking in a two-hour conference call to seal the deal on new cemetery regulations.

He has kept his eyes wide open the entire time, collecting experiences, insights and characters along the way. That is to say, he continues to develop new ways to intrigue, lead and manipulate readers until the very last page. □



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# Regarding representation

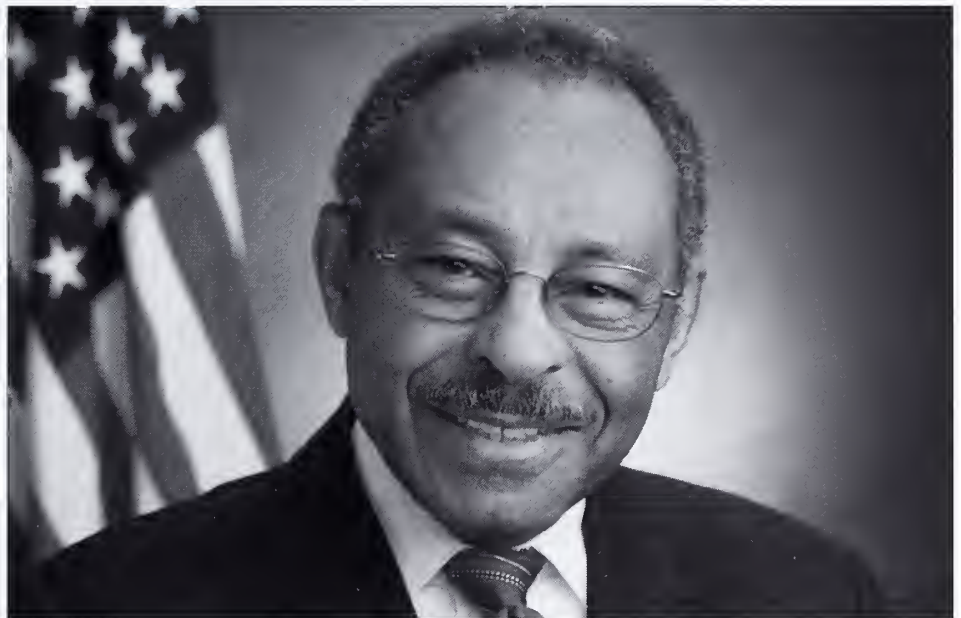
Is ideology, race, ethnicity, religion, gender or social class a better basis for representation in our legislative bodies than residence?

by James Krohe Jr.

U.S. Sen. Roland Burris announced July 10 that he would not seek election to that body in 2010. His absence seemed unlikely to have much impact on Illinois, but the prospect of his leaving spurred hand-wringing in some quarters about its effect on the Senate. The seat of Illinois' junior senator has been held by three of the nation's four African-American senators in the modern era and has acquired a symbolic importance that makes its occupant more than just one vote out of one hundred.

"If you ask anybody on the street 'Should this be a black seat?' says Timuel Black, a retired college professor and Chicago civil rights activist, "they'll tell you yes without even having to stop and think about it." Reader reaction to newspaper reports about Burris' decision suggested that people who did stop and think about it believed that the only group entitled to that seat is well-qualified candidates, whatever their color.

But what are the qualifications for office in an era in which identity, not interests, is the basis of more and more people's views? Presumably, Mr. Burris was appointed primarily because he is an African-American, his other qualifications being suspect. As such, he is what the wonks call a "descriptive representative." Such a person's own background matches his or her supporters in terms of gender, color, class or calling. That shared past puts them, as Jane Mansbridge of Harvard's Kennedy School of Government has put it, "existentially close to the



U.S. Sen. Roland Burris

issues." The descriptive representative feels not only our pain, as former President Bill Clinton used to do, but everything else, too.

A body comprising such representatives presumably would more closely represent the state or nation that elected it than do the current Congress or Illinois' General Assembly. While every citizen is a member of some minority in descriptive terms, our political institutions remain majoritarian. First-past-the-post electoral systems pose an formidable obstacle to minority candidates, including those espousing minority views. A university ward might elect a Green, for example, but in general, the requirement of a plurality in what are usually two-candidate races results in a

rough consensus at the cost of general disgruntlement. Politics under such a system is like a badly baked pie — soft in the middle but often burnt on the edges.

Ought minorities of all kinds be entitled to votes in legislative bodies simply because they are minorities? Is ideology, race, ethnicity, religion, gender or social class a more appropriate basis for representation in our legislative bodies than residence? Should the U.S. Senate or any other legislative body be a mirror (in ideological, social, or racial terms) of the public it purports to speak for? Will disaffected voters who have given up on government of and for the People perk up if the ballot promises a government for Me?

Raising such issues, if only inadvertently, may prove to be the only interesting thing Burris will have done in office.

**To many**, the premise of descriptive politics — that the only effective political representative is a sort of Mini-Me — is dubious. *Chicago Tribune* columnist Dawn Turner Trice offered as proof that white politicians can effectively serve multiracial constituencies the fact that Chicago Mayor Richard M. Daley either won or piled up big pluralities in every black ward against two prominent black challengers in the 2007 mayoral election.

But voting under plurality systems does not necessarily select the people voters want as representatives; it results in the people they think will be their representatives. Even when minority candidates (broadly defined) are on a ballot, voters eager to not waste their vote check the name of the least dislikable candidate who has a chance to win. And we must assume that the preferences of many of the voters who don't bother to vote at all is "None of the above."

The only way to achieve legislative bodies whose members approximate the larger general population in place-based electoral systems is to redefine the places. Gerrymandering of electoral district lines has long been used to protect racial interests by diluting minority voting strength. In Illinois, gerrymandering also was long used to protect rural interests by diluting the voting strength of Chicago.

Race-based manipulation when done by parties was damned because it frustrated majority interests. Now it is done by or on behalf of the courts and is celebrated as a way to advance minority

interests by raising their representation in legislatures closer to the proportion of each group's percentage of the population. Many racially problematic districts had their lines redrawn to encompass a mostly African-American or Latino electorate. In 1992, the first Latino congressman from Illinois was elected (in the person of veteran Chicago alderman Luis Guterrez) after the Democrat-controlled legislature helpfully redrew the boundaries of his House district. The result was the infamous-shaped "barbell" Fourth Congressional District, which unites the Pilsen, Humboldt Park and Logan Square neighborhoods to create a 64 percent Hispanic majority population.

Black and brown people are now more

not clear that this change has been an improvement at all.

Mark Bernstein, the former General Assembly aide to now-U.S. Sen. Richard Durbin and coauthor of *Almanac of State Legislative Elections*, argued in *Public Interest* in 1996 that the loss of the House by the Democrats gave the GOP the clout to impose a right-wing agenda that was inimical to the traditional black concerns. Carol Swain of Vanderbilt University is author of the 1993 book, *Black Faces, Black Interests: The Representation of African Americans in Congress*, one of the major scholarly analyses of the issue. Swain — herself black — concluded not only that African-Americans are not the only people who can represent black

interests effectively, but that those interests are more likely to be advanced by coalitions of black and white representatives whose constituencies include black voters.

The courts tend to reject the notion that a diligent representative can be all things to all people. That might be a sociological impossibility, but it is the essence of good politics. There are few farmers in the



*Former U.S. Sen. Carol Moseley Braun*

represented in Congress, thanks to court-ordered gerrymandering. Does that mean that black and brown voters are better represented? Clumping black voters into a few districts made the others more white and less Democratic. That happened across the white South, which was for so long Democratic and now is conservative Republican. The racial balance in the House improved very slightly, but the partisan balance tipped madly to the GOP. Representation thus improved for blacks in the sense that more black voters have congresspersons who are both black and Blue. But in substantive terms, it is

U.S. Senate, yet that body famously indulges that demographic. Dick Durbin may have been born in East St. Louis, but he has been as stalwart a defender of the farming interest as any native son of LaSalle County.

Color by itself also is an unreliable guide to the efficaciousness of a representative. Clinton, who has been called America's first black president, shared a deep cultural affinity with blacks. Barack Obama, a black-skinned man, has been in the past regarded dubiously by many African-Americans who doubted that he is authentically black.



It is useful to recall that Chicago's African-Americans were loyal backers of the party of Lincoln from Reconstruction through the New Deal. Not large in itself — before World War I only 3 percent of the city's population was African-American — the black vote could be crucial in tight races, as many races tended to be in those decades when the GOP was still a viable force in city politics. The result was that black voters were courted, and within limits, catered to. When the Democrats began courting the black vote during the Depression, to take one example of many, Mayor Edward Kelly set up a human relations commission and pushed for integrated public schools.

Representatives in mostly black districts no longer need to reach out to whites to form coalitions, just as white representatives of districts shorn of blacks no longer need to pay heed to traditional black issues. That makes both more electable in their districts but less willing to work cooperatively in drafting and passing bills that tend to the broader public interest but offend their narrow electoral base. Representatives of black-majority districts are less likely to be considered viable candidates for statewide office by the general public, not because they are black but because they are seen as only black.

Increasingly descriptive representation in Congress may trade substance for symbols. One of Mr. Burris' African-American predecessors, Carol Moseley Braun, said upon taking office in 1993, "I cannot escape the fact that I come to the Senate as a symbol of hope and change. Nor would I want to, because my presence in and of itself will change the U.S. Senate." It didn't, of course, except in the most superficial way. As Moseley Braun herself knew: "Symbols will not create jobs and economic growth. They do not do the hard work of solving the health care crisis. They will not save the children of our cities from drugs and guns and murder."

Illinois' African-Americans had by that point some considerable experience with symbolic representation. By the mid-1950s, south side mini-Machine boss William Dawson delivered enough votes to Democratic candidates that some called him the most powerful black elected official in the country. But Dawson's

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***Instead of a people's legislature, we now have lawmakers who are middle-class, middle-of-the-road and white-collar. Several sub-populations — racial and ethnic minorities, women, working people, eccentric thinkers of the left and the right — are present in disproportionately low numbers, if at all.***

allegiance was to party, not race. Not only did he not fight for civil rights measures, he occasionally fought against them. In response, a coalition of seven independent African-American aldermanic candidates was assembled in 1963 to fight segregation and discrimination and "plantation politics."

***Illinoisans used to*** enjoy a more "microcosmic representation" in the General Assembly. Elections were open. Any male (including immigrants) could vote; anyone could run. The system produced legislatures that more closely resembled genuine citizens' bodies, being made up of citizens from all callings, all regions and presumably all opinions. ***Instead of a people's legislature, we now have lawmakers who are middle-class, middle-of-the-road and white-collar. Several subpopulations — racial and ethnic minorities, women, working people, eccentric thinkers of the left and the right — are present in disproportionately low numbers, if at all.***

Might a return to more open elections bring Illinois' marginalized political constituencies back into the halls of power? That would suit the mood of that growing part of the electorate that has concluded that the main qualification for office is to be unqualified, in conventional terms. Their champion at the moment is Sarah Palin, who, notes *The New Yorker's* Sam Tanenhaus, "offers the erasure of any distinction — in skill,

experience, intellect — between the governing and the governed."

Alas, attempts to broaden representation by lowering barriers to entry—mainly by making it cheaper for plain folks to run — have disappointed reformers' hopes. In a 2008 paper, the Center for Competitive Politics looked at experiments in taxpayer-financed campaigning in Maine and Arizona and found no evidence that it increased the number of legislators from "nontraditional" backgrounds.

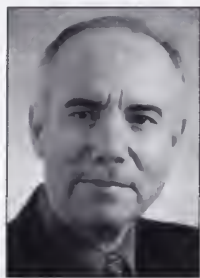
Perfect representativeness is probably impossible to achieve short of a lottery, but voting methods in common use (mainly abroad) can achieve a more perfectly representative body by giving each party (or religious or gender or racial group) that gets X percent of the vote approximately X percent of the seats. No one is seriously pushing for proportional representation, however.

Illinoisans of our day may have soured on structural reform as a solution to the problems of our democracy because they made such a mess the last time they tried it. Illinois had a quasi-proportional system, cumulative voting in three-member districts, to elect members of the General Assembly that tended to promote a more diverse representation than winner-take-all elections. In use for more than a century, it was tossed out in 1980 when voters indulged their disdain for legislators as a class at the expense of democracy and approved the Cutback Amendment, giving us a General Assembly in which the dissenting voice is heard less than ever.

Perhaps Illinoisans in their hard-earned wisdom worry that more diverse legislative bodies might be too representative. The example of Nauvoo should have soured Illinois lawmakers forever on theocratic politics. Minority parties make lousy coalition partners, since they tend to insist in matters of principle — meaning rigid adherence to party platforms — at the expense of practical governing. At the moment, party leaders don't fill even a small room, but they won't talk. Under a carelessly drafted proportional scheme, party leaders would fill a large room — and make so much noise they couldn't talk. □

*Freelance writer James Krohe is a frequent contributor to Illinois Issues.*

## Schools council named



*Miguel Del Valle*

recommendations about strengthening the state's education system.

**Miguel Del Valle**, Chicago city clerk and former state senator, was named by Gov. Pat Quinn as chairman of the state's P-20 (preschool through graduate school) Council, an advisory panel that will make recom-

Quinn, in announcing the panel's 23 members, said the group would play a key role in determining the state's approach to seeking a share of funds from the \$4.35 billion U.S. Department of Education program Race to the Top. Illinois could receive about \$400 million in discretionary funds through Race to the Top, according to the governor's office.

The other 23 members of the council include business leaders, school administrators, teachers, parents, members of civic groups and representatives of universities

and colleges. They include **Perry Buckley**, president of the Cook County College Teachers Union; **Ron Bullock**, chairman of the Illinois Manufacturers' Association; **Glenn Poshard**, president of Southern Illinois University; **Ron Huberman**, chief executive officer of the Chicago Public Schools system; the Rev. **Dennis Holtschneider**, president of DePaul University; **Kathy Ryg**, president of Voices for Illinois Children; and **Audrey Soglin**, executive director of the Illinois Education Association.

## Honors



*Judy Erwin*

**Judy Erwin**, executive director of the Illinois Board of Higher Education, received the annual Motorola Foundation Excellence in Public Service Award during a breakfast ceremony December 9 in Chicago.

The prestigious honor is presented to "a nonelected government employee who has had an extraordinary impact on the quality of government services in the city of Chicago, Cook County or the state of Illinois," Darcy

Davidsmeyer, director of government affairs for Motorola, said in presenting the award to Erwin. The event at the Palmer House Hilton Hotel in Chicago was hosted by the Motorola Foundation in partnership with the Civic Federation.

"Judy is someone who represents the best of the public sector professionals, who focus on getting things done effectively and efficiently, who can communicate goals and objectives [and] lead under demanding and restraining financial times," Davidsmeyer says.

Erwin has been executive director of the state Board of Higher Education since 2005. She previously had served for 10 years in the Illinois House of Representatives, where she was chairwoman of the House Higher Education Committee.

As executive director of the Board of Higher Education, Erwin has worked with various constituencies to develop an agenda that seeks to improve educational attainment for the state's residents. She also was instrumental in creating a data system to track students' progress throughout their entire academic experience and launched a Web site to help students sort through the array of higher education opportunities in Illinois.

In accepting the award, Erwin laughingly said that when she left the legislature and began running a state agency, she quickly realized that "it always seemed easier when you're on the other side."

"We have a lot of challenges in front of us right now," she says, "and it will take all of the talent and good will that we can muster."

**John "Ben" Roe**, state's attorney for Ogle County, was honored by the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation for his leadership of the Ogle County Juvenile Justice Council and his work in juvenile justice reform. In December, Roe was named as a Champion for Change at the annual Models for Change conference in Washington, D.C. Supported by the MacArthur Foundation, Models for Change is a national initiative to reform juvenile justice across the country.

Roe has been chair of the Ogle County Juvenile Justice Council since 2004. A former juvenile prosecutor and juvenile probation officer, Roe used his experience to help create an unprecedented agreement with the judiciary, probation department and public defenders to ensure juvenile offenders undergo a professional assessment in the early stage of their contact with the justice system. The information received from the assessment helps determine whether instead of incarceration, the youth could benefit from a variety of services, including mental health therapy, treatment for drug addictions and family counseling.

"We want to focus on diverting the least at-risk kids into community programs where they can get treatment and work with the community," Roe says. "The less kids are detained and tied up in the court system, and the harder we work to get at the root of the problem, the more time probation officers will have to devote to high-risk and serious offenders."

Saldana said in a prepared statement.

She is also a member of the Metropolitan Planning Council and the Chicago Metropolitan 2020 executive council. She was president of the Chicago Park District Board of Commissioners from 2002 to 2007. Saldana has a bachelor's degree in psychology from Stanford University and a law degree from the University of California, Berkeley, School of Law.

## New toll authority member appointed

**Maria Saldana** of Chicago was appointed in December to the Illinois State Toll Highway Authority Board of Directors.

Saldana is the senior vice president for public finance at Duncan-Williams Inc., a regional investment banking firm.

"I am pleased to appoint Maria Saldana

to the tollway board of directors," Gov. Pat Quinn said in a prepared release. "I am confident that her commitment to public service and extensive legal and financial experience will be of great service to the board and the millions of residents who use the tollway each year."

"I want to thank Governor Quinn for this opportunity to serve, and I look forward to working with the tollway board,"



## Big people on campus

**Rita Hartung Cheng**, current provost and vice chancellor for academic affairs for the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, has been named chancellor of Southern Illinois University Carbondale.

She was selected by Southern Illinois University President Glenn Poshard in November and appointed by the university's board of trustees in December.

Cheng, a licensed certified public accountant, holds a doctorate in management from Temple University and a master of business administration from the University of Rhode Island. She has served as provost and vice chancellor for academic affairs at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee since May 2005.

"Dr. Cheng's impressive academic qualifications, her extensive scholarship and her record of commitment to community and higher education service demonstrated to me an individual ready to lead this university with great passion and skill," Poshard stated in a prepared release.

Poshard's decision to recommend Cheng followed a nearly year-long selection process for a new chancellor, which included the appointment in May of a 19-member search committee co-chaired by Peggy Stockdale, professor of psychology and program director of Applied Psychology, and Tom Britton, associate professor of law and director of Graduate Legal Studies.

"Dr. Cheng distinguished herself among a very strong pool of candidates. Her outstanding educational background, administrative experience and the success she's had at UWM in reorganizing administrative functions to achieve growth in enrollment, diversity, academic programming and student achievements make her a particularly good fit for SIUC," Stockdale stated in a prepared release. "Dr. Cheng is 'quietly competent.' She asks deep questions and listens intently. She impressed everyone at SIUC who met with her with her frankness, openness and tremendous

interest in the issues facing SIUC."

Cheng replaces **Samuel Goldman**, who had served as interim chancellor since April of 2008.



*Rita Hartung Cheng*

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## LETTERS

### Tax increase may not solve spending beyond state's means

As an eager reader of *Illinois Issues*, I'm dismayed to see so little attention dedicated to discussing the policy changes that will help make Illinois a more attractive place to open and run a business. After all, the taxes paid by businesses and their employees go a long way in funding state government. When we drive entrepreneurs away with bad legislation, everyone loses.

Currently, Illinois ranks 44th and 48th, respectively, in its economic outlook and performance, according to the ALEC-Laffer State Economic Competitiveness Index. Hiking taxes will only make the state's outlook worse as residents and companies flee to states that implement pro-growth policies.

Yes, it's important that the opinion leaders who read *Illinois Issues* discuss funding options for nonprofits, state agencies and government service providers, but let's not lose sight of the big picture. Illinois' state spending has increased 39 percent from 1998 to 2008 (after inflation) while Illinois' population growth has been minimal, increasing just under 7 percent. In 1998, state spending per resident was \$3,500; 10 years later, state spending per resident was \$4,600 (inflation adjusted). The budget deficit is a direct result of spending beyond our means.

Professor Jack Van Der Slik (see *Illinois Issues*, October 2009, page 30) may believe that a massive tax hike could be 1) truly temporary and 2) used to pay off past debts instead of authorizing new expenditures, but past experiences with such measures should make us wary.

*Kristina Rasmussen  
Illinois Policy Institute  
Springfield*

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Charles N. Wheeler III



## GOP be aware: The Latino voting bloc is on the rise

by Charles N. Wheeler III

**A**s Election Year 2010 dawns over Illinois, who can blame Republicans for being enthusiastic — maybe even salivating — over their prospects in November?

After being skunked in statewide elections four years ago — and losing two congressional seats in 2008 — the GOP seems to have good reason to be upbeat, thanks to Rod Blagojevich and the miserable record Democrats have compiled at the reins of state government.

Blagojevich currently is slated to go on trial on public corruption charges this summer, and the proceedings could well last deep into the campaign season, fueling voter anger at Democrats.

Running a close second as a GOP talking point is the state's abysmal fiscal condition, over which Democrats have presided since 2003. The anticipated general funds shortfall for the coming fiscal year is the largest in state history, and credit-rating agencies have marked the state down to the point where only California is seen as a worse risk.

No easy or painless solutions exist to close the gap. As the folks in charge, Democrats must consider deep budget cuts and stiff tax increases as they try to craft a FY 2011 budget by May 31, or run the risk of a state government meltdown heading toward Election Day.

So why is former Gov. Jim Edgar — arguably the state's most highly regarded GOP figure — warning his party mates

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*“Numerically, you can’t give up a huge segment of the electorate like that.”*

*Former Gov. Jim Edgar*

that dark days might lie ahead?

The answer can be found in another major 2010 undertaking, the decennial federal census. The official nose-counting is expected to document what's been clear to demographers and to Illinois political watchers for some time: The state is becoming more Hispanic and Asian, changes that do not bode well for Republicans.

The U.S. Census Bureau's most recent population estimate, released last May, underscored the demographic shift. The report showed Illinois gaining more than 480,000 people since the 2000 census, almost 4 percent growth. Looking deeper into the numbers, bureau demographers calculated that the state's Hispanic population grew 28.5 percent — almost 437,000 — to nearly 2 million, while non-Hispanic Asians increased 28.4 percent, to almost 550,000 individuals, about 122,000 more than in 2000. The numbers for non-Hispanic blacks were virtually

unchanged, at almost 1.9 million. Meanwhile, the non-Hispanic white population shrank by almost 123,000, to 8.3 million, a 1.4 percent decline.

Why should Republicans be concerned about greater diversity in the Prairie State? Simply put, because voters in burgeoning ethnic communities — particularly Latinos — tend to vote Democratic. Consider exit polling done in November 2008 by the Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights and Union Radio News, available on the coalition's Web site, [www.icirr.org](http://www.icirr.org). Besides the standard questions about issues and candidates, respondents — all foreign-born, naturalized citizens — were asked how favorable they considered the two major parties to immigrants. Seventy-one percent of the 1,255 Latino voters surveyed said they considered the Republican Party not favorable to immigrants, while only 6 percent saw Democrats in the same light. Asian-born citizens were not as harsh on the GOP. Only 46 percent saw Republicans as anti-immigrant, while 5 percent held that opinion about Democrats.

“Our only hope at the state level and nationally to be a viable political party is we gotta attract Hispanic voters,” Edgar says. “If Hispanic voters become as Democratic as African-American voters over the last 70 years, the Republican Party will go the way of the Whigs.

Numerically, you can't give up a huge segment of the electorate like that."

The former governor is "absolutely right," says Joshua Hoyt, executive director of the immigrant rights coalition. Hispanic and Asian-American voters make up about 9 percent of the Illinois electorate, while African-Americans comprise 13 percent of voters. If statewide Republican hopefuls start with only 10 percent support among those groups — 22 percent of the electorate — they've got to find "an awful lot of white moderates" to make up the difference, he noted.

Immigration reform is at the root of GOP difficulties with Hispanics and, to a lesser extent, Asian-American voters, Edgar and Hoyt believe.

Republicans made inroads in courting Hispanic and other immigrant voters during the 1980s and 1990s, Edgar says, but the gains were undone by the tenor of the 2007 immigration debate.

"We were making progress, but that got stopped and put into reverse," he says, when Republican leaders in the U.S.

House took a hard-line, anti-immigrant stance, criminalizing undocumented aliens and helping defeat President Bush' efforts to provide a path to eventual citizenship for persons in the country illegally.

"A lot of Hispanics took the rhetoric to be offensive, even Hispanics who were citizens," Edgar says. "They took it personal, thought it was directed at all Hispanics."

Hoyt believes the harsh rhetoric was a "highly cynical" strategy by GOP congressional leaders seeking a wedge issue to bring concerned whites into the Republican camp.

The plan was "a spectacular failure," though, and the "absolutely horrible message" caused Republican candidates to "bleed Latino voters," Hoyt said. In 2004, for example, Democratic presidential candidate John Kerry got 60 percent of the Latino vote, including 51 percent of naturalized voters. Four years later, President Barack Obama garnered 67 percent of the Latino vote, including 75 percent of naturalized voters. The GOP likely will

have a chance to remake its image before November, though. Immigration reform ranks high on Obama's legislative agenda, and Congress is likely to take up the issue later this year.

The Republican Party needs to revisit the issue, Edgar said, and GOP candidates must become active in the Hispanic community and show attention to its concerns.

With immigration off the table, Hoyt believes Republicans can compete with Democrats for Latino votes by using bedrock GOP positions on social issues.

But if GOP leaders ignore Edgar and other moderates and allow "the people trying to fan the flames of rancid, racialized populism" to become the voice of the GOP, Hoyt says, the party's future in Illinois may be bleak.

"If Republicans are permanently defined with the new Latino voter as the party of hate, they're going to have a hard time in this state." □

*Charles N. Wheeler III is director of the Public Affairs Reporting program at the University of Illinois Springfield.*

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"If Republicans are permanently



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